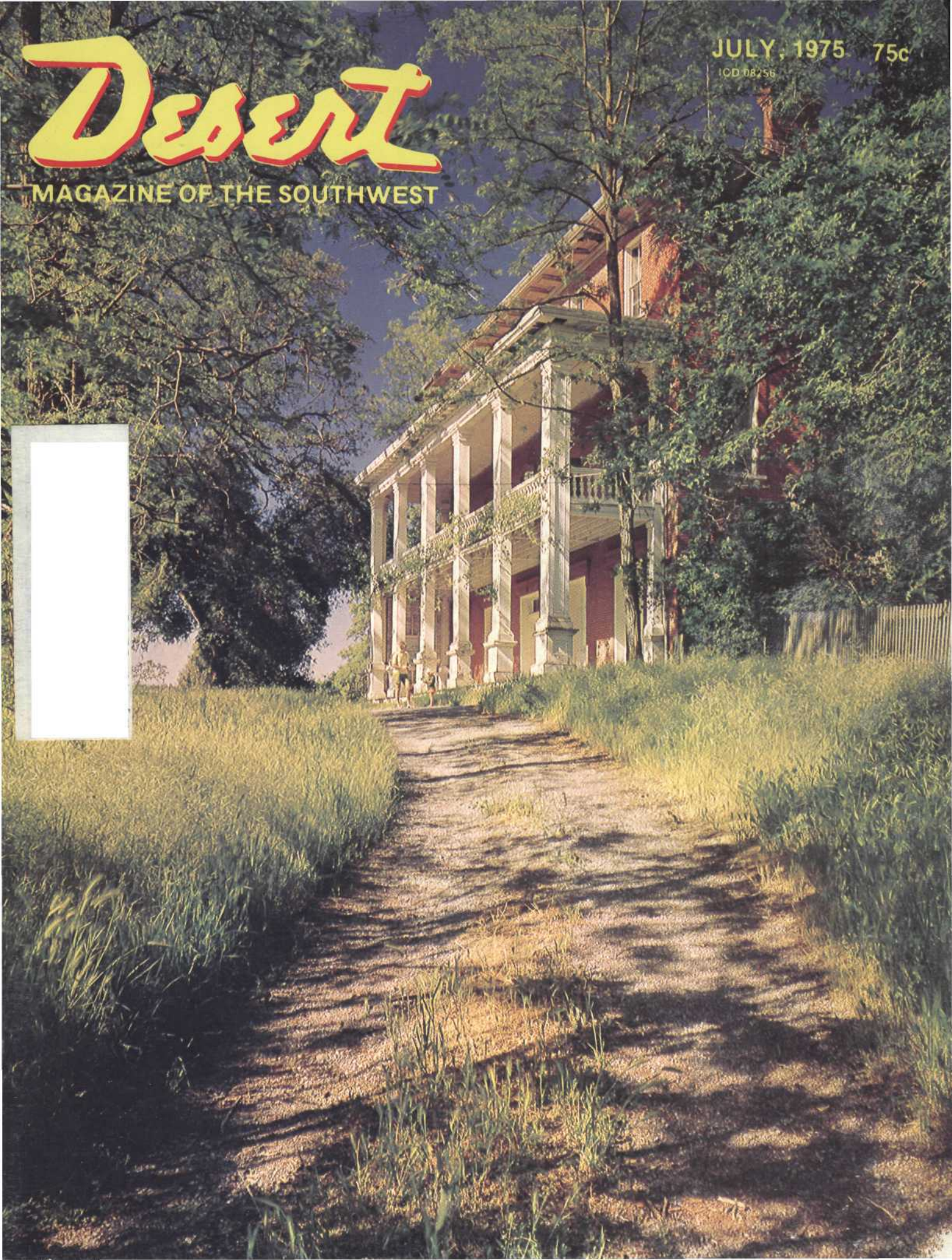


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PLUS! A special bonus will be the screening of the film, "The Devil's Highway," a re-creation of the 600-mile journey of Captain Juan Bautista De Anza, in 1775-6 across the deserts of Old Mexico and Southern California. The film contains wildlife, ecology, treasure hunting and wilderness adventure and is in full color. Added to the program will be a short treasure hunting film. This is free to visitors at the show.

Families are especially welcome, and a discount rate of \$4 admits your immediate family to any single day of the show. Write to Sunshine Publishing House for free individual discount tickets that will save you up to 25% on the \$2 price admission. Clubs wishing free display space should also con-



**DESERT RELICS**—Desert relic and treasure hunting exhibits are some of the many exhibits visitors will enjoy at the 1st Annual Palm Springs Gold Mining & Treasure Hunting Show.



**WORLD PREMIERE**—The world premiere of "The Devil's Highway," a feature-length film in full color that follows the trail of Juan Bautista De Anza across Mexico and Southern California on the 200th anniversary of the explorer's trip is free to visitors at the First Annual Palm Springs Gold Mining and Treasure Hunting Show.

tact the show offices so that arrangements can be made.

Guest lecturers at the show will include dowsing, mining, prospecting and treasure hunting, so that you can sharpen your skills in these arts. Located in the brand new Palm Springs Pavilion, with the latest in theatre projection equipment, air conditioning and other conveniences, you'll enjoy your visit to this desert mecca for tourists.

Write: Guy Golley, Show Director, Sunshine Publishing House, P. O. Box 93, Duarte, California, 91010 or Sunshine Publishing House, P. O. Box 1837, Bisbee, Arizona, 85603.

Make your plans now to attend the  
**First Annual PALM SPRINGS GOLD MINING AND TREASURE HUNTING SHOW**  
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Volume 38, Number 7

JULY 1975

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Old Grange Hall, near  
Pilot Hill in California's  
Mother Lode Country.  
Photo by David Muench,  
Santa Barbara, California

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## A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

IT IS with deep regret that I inform the readership of the death of Jack Pepper, a former editor and publisher of *Desert Magazine*. For 11 years, his articles and photos have appeared on our pages, and the many thousands of readers who followed his travels through the West will mourn his passing. Semi-retired for two years, Jack was stricken suddenly with cancer. His last article, which was dictated from his hospital bed, appears on the centerspread and is entitled, "On the Gold Rush Trail." We will all miss Jack, but will treasure his

legacy of words and pictures.

\* \* \*

Following the Gold Rush theme, Thomas Moore presents a string of ghost towns and camps from times long past. These little jewels are off the beaten track and bear such names as Poverty Hill, Port Wine and Poker Flat. A big bonus for ghost town buffs.

Back on the beaten track is Howard Neal's piece on Columbia which has been a State Park since 1954.

Aurora and Bodie, two well-known ghosts come in for their share of the spotlight from the pen of Mary Frances Strong.

A new author to *Desert*, Thos. Bryant, tells us that the magic of Baja California still remains despite the new highway and takes us on an intriguing loop trip from San Felipe on the east coast, down through Puertecitos, Gonzaga Bay, Bahia de Los Angeles, and then inland to Rosarito, Punta Prieta, El Marmol and returning home on the new highway.

Iva Geisinger, author of "Bring on the Bottle Brigade," expounds on bottles and bottle collecting and will undoubtedly bring new recruits to this fascinating hobby.

Jim Cornett rounds out this issue by introducing the little-known Haymaker, the Pika, and Katherine Dienes and Jean Gillingwaters relate their interesting experiences while rafting down Utah's San Juan River. This was not a commercial venture, but was made with their husbands' home-made raft.

\* \* \*

As is our usual summer policy, our Book Shop will be open from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. Monday through Friday. We will be closed Saturday and Sunday. We have enjoyed visiting with our many readers who have stopped by our new location.



Jack Pepper—1920-1975.

*William Kuyper*



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# Books for Desert Readers

All books reviewed are available through the  
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include 6% state sales tax.



### GOLD FEVER

By Helen E. Wilson

Man's dream, just after the turn of the  
century, was to strike it rich, to find a  
bonanza of gold. Some men had the  
GOLD FEVER and never recovered from  
it. However, it was those men and wo-  
men who traveled the rugged land into

isolated places and wrested gold and  
silver from lonely hills, that met the chal-  
lenge to make a good life and a decent  
community from a prospector's tent  
town.

Hattie, a city girl, and Jack, a hunter,  
prospector and miner, met, romanced  
and married. GOLD FEVER portrays  
how this young couple with their two  
babies followed the desolate life of pros-  
pecting against formidable odds during  
the Nevada Gold Strike in Jarbidge. Sit-  
uated in the northeastern corner of the  
state, this storied canyon community has  
lived lustily—almost died and now lives  
again. Jarbidge flowed to prosperity on  
the tide of prospecting and mining, but  
ebbed to near obscurity when the rich  
gold and silver metals petered out. It is a  
far cry from the old rollicking mining  
days, and yet the dirt street, false front  
buildings, log houses and ramshackle  
mills are kept as a remembrance.

More than eight years of careful re-  
search went into the preparation and  
writing of this book. The author's mother  
was an ardent amateur photographer  
and had kept informative letters, many  
from what are now ghost towns. GOLD  
FEVER is fabulously illustrated with  
early-day pictures, map and memora-  
bilias, having 70 such illustrations spaced  
throughout the story. There are pages of  
love, promises and news; dangerous but  
exciting days, as well as hardships.

Softbound, 140 pages, non-fiction,  
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## LOGGING THE REDWOODS

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The story of the California redwood lumber industry,  
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edge of the redwood country is joined with John Labbe's  
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tured are many photographs from the collection of Au-  
gustus William Ericson, pioneer redwood country  
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THE WIND LEAVES NO SHADOW  
By Ruth Laughlin

On the night Dona Tules Barcelo  
opened her own gambling sala in Santa  
Fe, no one dared remind the fiery red-  
haired beauty that her mother had been a  
peon and that she herself had once  
worked for 40 pennies a year. As she  
swept gracefully across the only wooden  
floor in town, she was proudly aware that  
it was her wits and beauty alone that had  
made her a rich, powerful woman.



The story of this exciting historical figure is a vivid picture of life in the Southwest in the 1830's when all that territory belonged to Mexico. At Santa Fe, the musty pomp of fading Spain mingled with the acrid smell and lusty language of buffalo hunters, gringo traders, gamblers, elegant caballeros, and crooked politicians plundering the new nation. It was a time when all lived dangerously, and Dona Tules Barcelo more dangerously than all.

Experiencing cold, hunger, the terror of Navajo raids and bitter hopelessness of the poor as a child, her luck began to turn when she was given a gold friendship ring by a blue-eyed Yankee, and Dona Tules began her role as a notorious gambling queen. She became the governor's mistress and a power in the town where she once had been despised. Her gambling sala in Santa Fe was the rendezvous where conflicting forces of customs and traditions, old and new ideas challenged each other. **THE WIND LEAVES NO SHADOW** is a powerful story of love, hate, and jealousy, told against the authentic background of a growing, vigorous America.

**CABALLEROS**, the author's first book, was published in 1931 and is considered a classic among Southwestern literature. For her second book, **THE WIND LEAVES NO SHADOW**, Ruth Laughlin interviewed hundreds of old-timers to trace the story of Dona Tules. One of the many clues she used was the ox-hide money chest used by Dona Tules 100 years ago when she filled it with silver pesos for her monte "bank" and dealt at fiestas. This chest now belongs to Miss Laughlin.

Hardcover, 361 pages, first published in 1951, it is now in its sixth printing. \$4.95.

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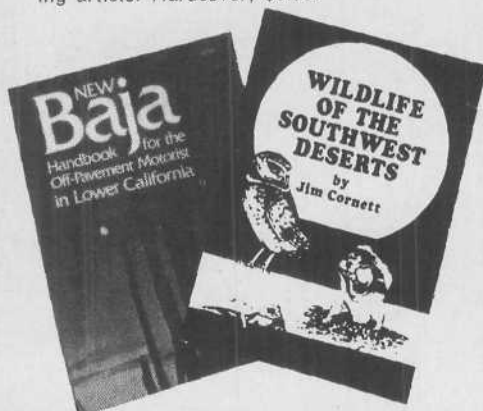
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**BACK ROADS OF CALIFORNIA** by Earl Tholander and the Editors of Sunset Books. Early stagecoach routes, missions, remote canyons, old prospector cabins, mines, cemeteries, etc., are visited as the author travels and sketches the California Backroads. Through maps and notes, the traveler is invited to get off the freeways and see the rural and country lanes throughout the state. Hardcover, large format, unusually beautiful illustrations, 207 pages, \$10.95.

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**GHOST TOWNS AND MINING CAMPS OF CALIFORNIA** by Remi Nadeau. An excellent book on California ghost towns. We recommend it highly. Paperback, \$3.75.

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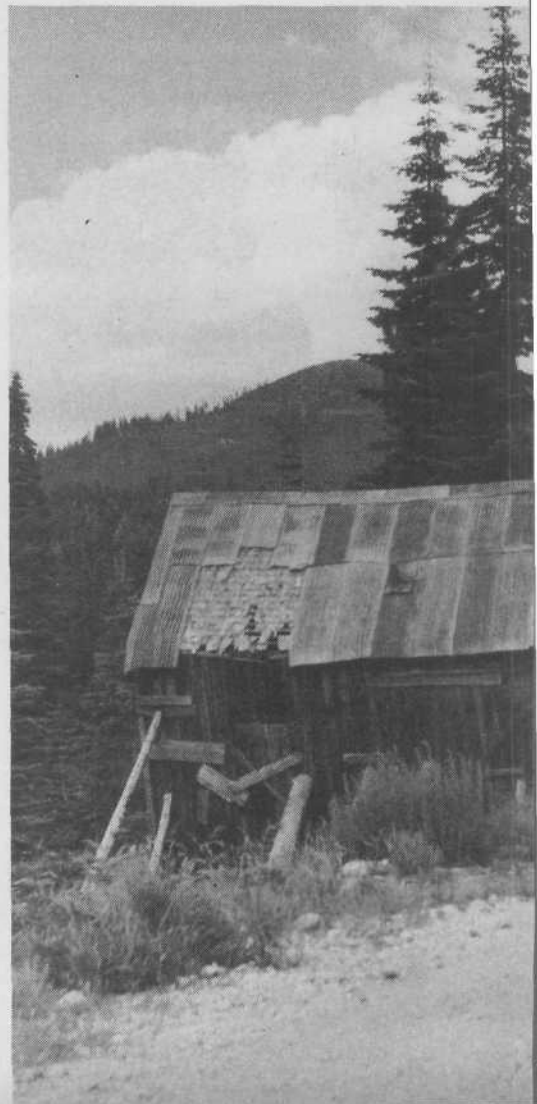
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*I beheld, and lo,  
there was no  
man, and all the  
birds of the  
heavens were  
fled. I beheld,  
and lo, the  
fruitful place was  
a wilderness, and  
all the cities  
thereof were  
broken down at  
the presence  
of the Lord, and  
by His fierce  
anger. For there  
hath the Lord  
said, "The whole  
land shall be  
desolate; yet will  
I not make a  
full end."*

*Jeremiah 4:25-27*

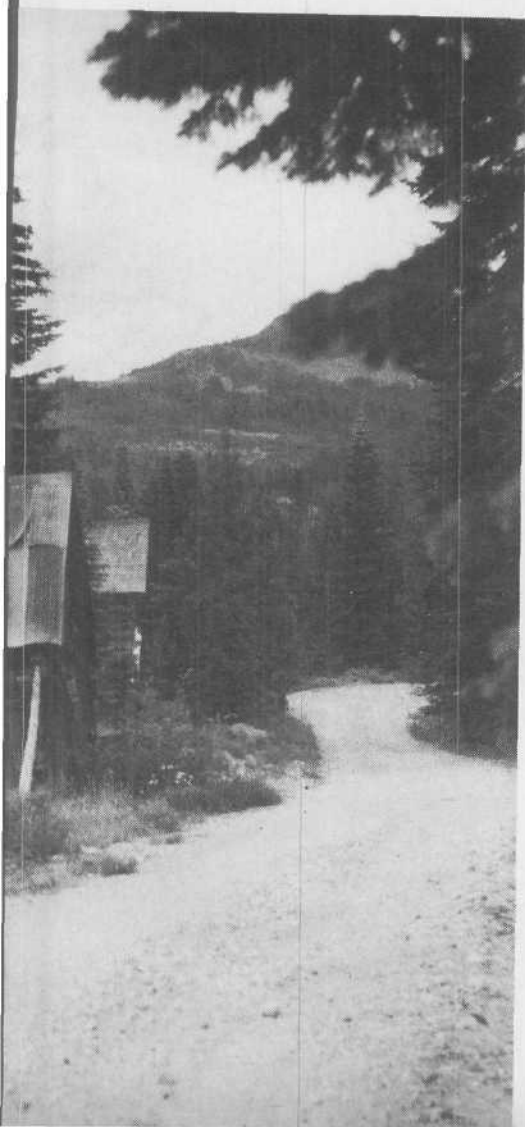
*Above: Gibsonville, 1850. The Taber mine was a very rich producer through the years as Gibsonville vied with Howland Flats and Rabbit Creek in riches and populace. Right: Howland Flats, 1851. Tired old buildings, dressed in widow's black, like harpies and crones, lean on crutches awaiting the funeral that is sure to come for this once prosperous city. Far right: Poker Flat, 1851. Slack jawed and open mouthed, eyeless window sockets stare at my intrusion. This old home awaits the fate of its skeletonized neighbor in the foreground.*





# A String of Pearls

by THOMAS W. MOORE

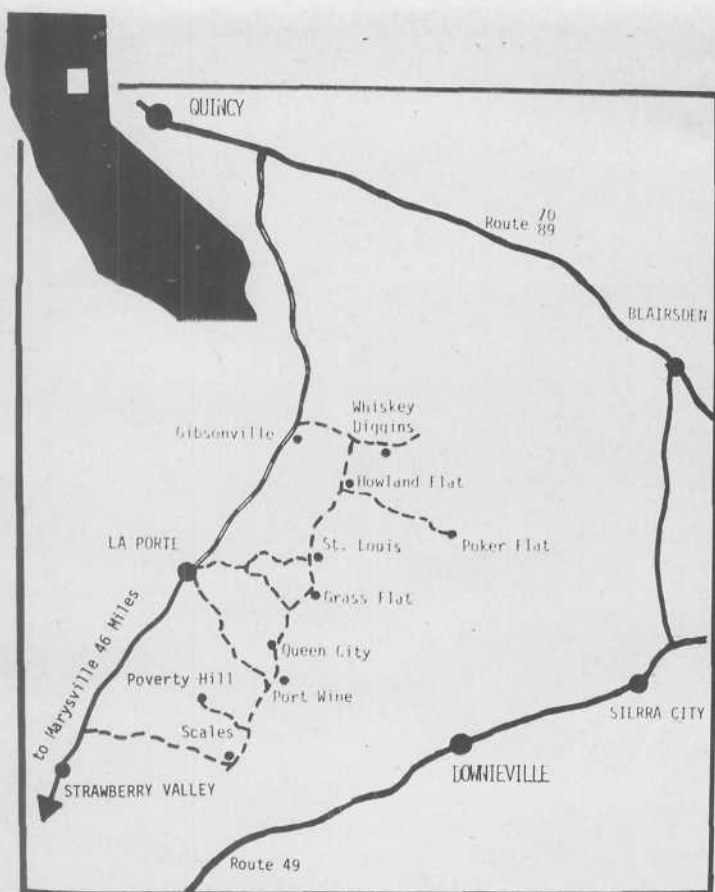


Lost cities in the Sierra Nevada mountains, born of California's fabulous gold rush era, fire the imagination of adventurer, hunter, tourist and romanticist alike! No ordinary foothill, Mother Lode gold cities these, we are scaling the dizzy heights of California's forgotten Sierra mountains on roads that are but indistinct rocky ledges in search of the real ghost towns of that once golden age.

Desert/July 1975

The heavily timbered, foreboding slopes, the narrow, twisting trails have for a century screened from discovery the tumbling ruins of a string of ghost towns flung across mountain peaks and canyon clefts northeast of Marysville, between Laporte and Quincy — a string of pearls for the insatiable ghost town hunter or historical romanticist.

Imagine, if you can, the lush timber



*Below:  
Poverty Hill,  
1851.  
Hydraulic debris  
starts  
at the  
very edge  
of town,  
but the town  
produced over  
four million  
dollars  
in gold  
through  
its lifetime.*

growth, the sharply pointed ridges, the steep canyons dropping away from the edge of the narrow road to a stream bed 2000 to 3000 feet below. Imagine the deep paralyzing winter snows 15 feet deep traversed by men and women on 8-

or 12-foot skis — imagine horses wearing snowshoes and mail delivery by dog sled. Imagine the privation and hardship of long winters begun in October and lasting until the end of May.

Ah, the strikes that formed the towns

— Poverty Hill! Port Wine! Queen City! Grass Flat! St. Louis! St. Louis?? Yes, and Whiskey Diggins, Howland Flat, Gibsonville and Poker Flat — and then there are Scales and Onion Valley and oh, so many others, all in a chunk of gold-bearing rock 10 miles long and less than a couple of miles in width!

Thus, for photographers, history and ghost town buffs and adventurers, a tour of these "lost" Sierra camps will bring its own reward. While there are still ghost towns scattered throughout California and Nevada, this is the only area where one may visit as many as eight such towns in a single day.

This remote area of Sierra County was prospected in the spring of 1850. Captain Sears, an old sea dog who left his ship in San Francisco when the news of gold discovery was new, found gold on the high ridge that bears his name between the North Fork of the Yuba and the South Fork of the Feather Rivers.

When Sears had gathered a company of prospectors together and was returning to mine his discovery, he was followed by a group led by a man named Gibson. Upon being ordered to turn back, Gibson refused and retorted that the mountains of California were as free for them to mine as any man. A compromise was worked out, and both groups proceeded to Sears Ridge where the camp of Sears' Diggings came into being. Later, Gibson found other rich deposits and one in particular, on a ridge overlooking Little Slate Creek, became the site of thriving, brawling, Gibsonville which boomed until 1870.

Even as Gibsonville was first developing, Gibson and his men found gold deposits which they attempted to keep a secret among themselves. This kind of chicanery fired dissension between his men and the Sears faction and scattered the two groups as suspicious individual effort quickly replaced the group endeavor. Thus were the new camps born. Brandy City, Hepsidam, Scales, Queen City, Pine Grove, Whiskey Diggins, Potosi, Morristown and Eureka City were just a few of these new camps.

St. Louis, staked out on the site of Sears' Diggings in 1852 by a group from Missouri, boomed until it was swept by fire in 1857. During the 1860's the town prospered again because of the hydraulic mining boom. Howland Flat, whose post office was called Table Rock and which





*Scales, 1851. The old mine bunkhouse and kitchen on a rainy day in June. In 1860, there were 59 males and 13 females in the town.*

functioned from 1857 to 1922, is located on the north side of Table Rock at an elevation of 6000 feet. Because of the great hydraulic mining activity in the area, and perhaps because of its fine brewery, Howland Flat became one of the most populous towns of the Sierra.

The frequent references to hydraulic mining indicate the extent of that kind of operation in this region. E.E. Matteson invented the method in 1853 which continued until the Anti-Debris Act of 1883 closed all hydraulic mining in California. The washed-out silt choked the rivers and covered the rich agricultural bottomland in the Sacramento River valley.

The Lost Sierra is also famous for the debut of Lotta Crabtree at La Porte in the summer of 1854. Of course, as every knowledgeable skier knows, downhill ski racing had its beginning in America at

La Porte sometime around 1854. The world's first ski club was organized between 1858 and 1861. While La Porte, founded in 1850 as Rabbit Creek, is in the center of this string of abandoned cities, it is definitely not a ghost town. A shadow town, perhaps, with a lusty history of its own, it shows renewed life and vigor with tourism.

It should be noted for our tour that while all the roads to these old towns are rough and scary, they are passable for automobiles in summer with the exception of the road down to Poker Flat which needs four-wheel-drive all the way. Summer in these mountains is from July 4th to the first storm. The old camps strung together every three or four miles by these single-lane roads resemble a string of beads — "pearls" for the ghost towners. □

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are happening at . . .

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P. O. Box 675  
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California 92328

## Columbia, California

**LOCATION:** Columbia is located east of California Highway 49, four miles north of Sonora.

**BRIEF HISTORY:** In late winter and early spring, rainfall in the foothills of the western Sierra Nevada Mountains can be torrential. So it was the night of March 27, 1850. Thaddeus and George Hildreth, and several other prospectors, were moving through the foothills seeking their fortune. They camped for the night at a spot near what was to become the site of Columbia. The rains came, the creeks rose, and the sleeping prospectors became soaked. By morning, though, the weather had changed. The sky was bright and clear. The sun was warm. So, blankets were spread out to dry before the group moved on. In order to pass the time while the sun did its work, the men did a little prospecting. The group did **not** move on! The color of the gold in the gravel was brilliant. In just two days nearly \$5,000 was taken from the stream beds!

Word passed quickly in the Mother Lode country. Within days prospectors were coming from near and far. In a month there were more than 5,000 miners on the site, and a town was born. First it was called Hildreth's Diggings, then American Camp, and finally Columbia.

Within two years of the Hildreth discovery, Columbia had become a small city. Typical of mining

towns it counted some 30 saloons among its nearly 150 businesses. The town was growing fast, and buildings were being completed almost daily. But they were not to last long. They were wood, and in the summer of 1854 the inevitable fire struck. The entire center of the business district, with the exception of one brick building, was wiped out.

Columbia was rebuilt. This time many of the buildings were brick. Again in August of 1857, another fire struck. A 13-square-block area was engulfed in the conflagration and the remaining frame structures were destroyed.

Columbia was rebuilt again and, as it had in so many gold towns, a Mother Lode architecture evolved. The buildings were brick with iron shutters and doors. Neither fire nor vandals could attack these buildings. Nor, as it turned out, could the ravages of weather and time. More than a century later, many still stand with a long life remaining.

In the decade between 1850 and 1860, Columbia became the largest city among what were known as the Southern Mines. Population estimates of the day range from 15,000 to an improbable high of 40,000. Whatever the truth, Columbia was a big town.

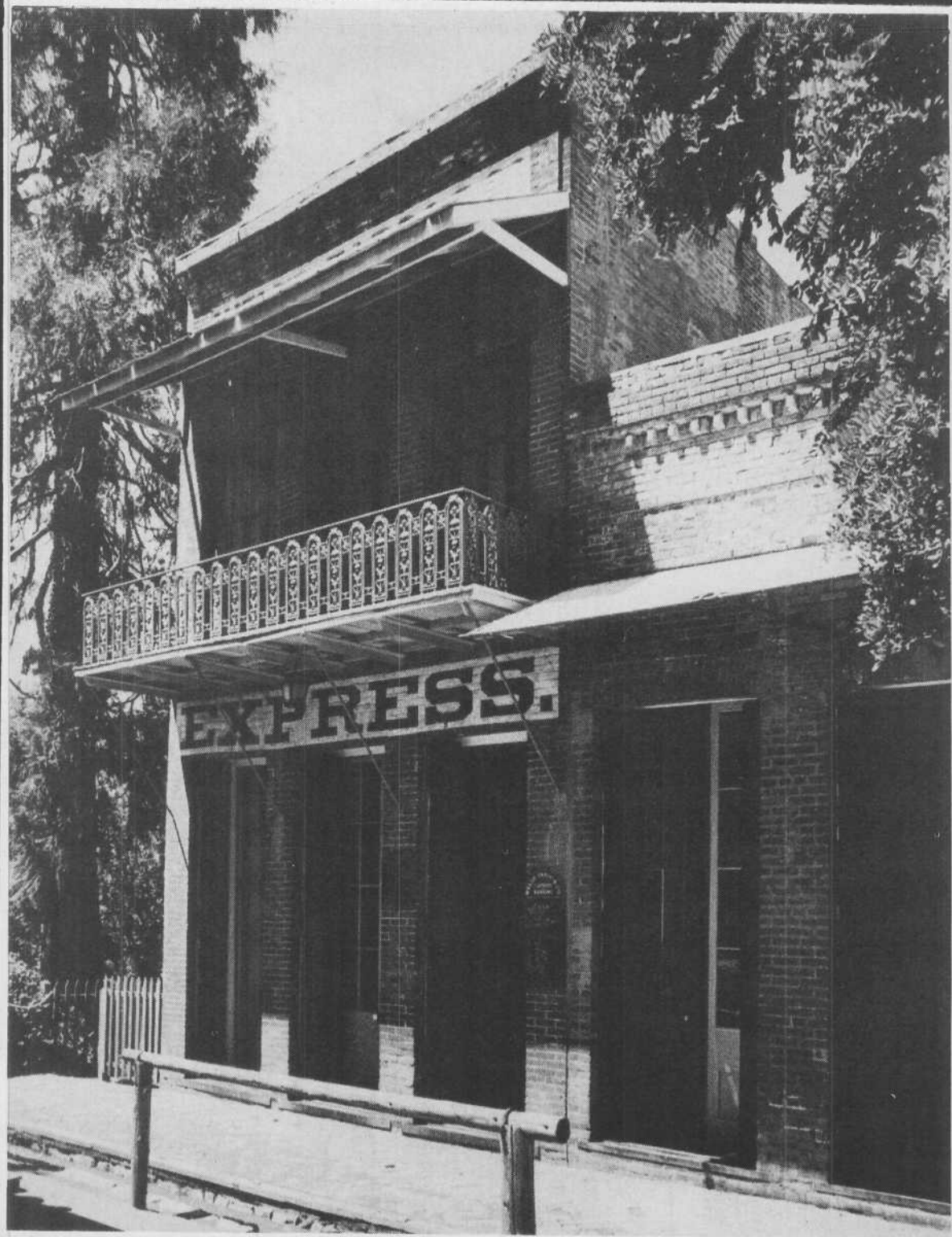
By 1860 the decline of Columbia had started. The placer gold was gone, and the miners were moving on. Buildings were being vacated, and



A miner's cabin, which is more than 80 years old, is among the more than 40 gold rush era buildings that have been preserved and restored at Columbia State Park. Exhibits are being added regularly as part of the Park restoration program. Photographs by Edward Neal



Columbia's Wells Fargo and Company express office was built following the fire of 1857 which destroyed thirteen square blocks of the city. Scales on display in the office weighed out more than \$55 million in miner's gold dust and nuggets.



some were being torn down. Columbia, whose mines produced \$87 million in gold, was on its way to becoming a ghost. Columbia was never abandoned. It never, quite, became a true ghost. The population dropped to below 500, but there was always someone to call Columbia home.

In 1945, the California Legislature decided that a typical gold rush town should be preserved and restored. Columbia was chosen. Now known as Columbia State Park, Hildreth's Diggings is once again showing its luster as the "Gem of the Southern Mines."

Desert/July 1975

**COLUMBIA TODAY:** Has the State allowed commercialism to spoil Columbia? The true ghost town enthusiast will undoubtedly say yes. For him the stage coach rides, and other tourist attractions, will distract from the historical theme. Yet, there is much history to see in Columbia. It is all there, preserved and restored authentically. More, perhaps, can be learned about California gold rush life and times in this one spot than in any other. Columbia is an ideal first stop, before seeing the true ghosts of the Mother Lode. Besides, even a ghost town buff's children will enjoy a "real" stage coach ride! □







# Aurora's New Treasures

*Old schoolhouse through  
hotel door frame at  
Bodie State Historical Park.  
Photo by David Muench.*

by MARY FRANCES STRONG

Photos by Jerry Strong

HIGH IN THE Bodie Hills, east of the California-Nevada border, the ghostly remains of a mining town lie cradled among the flanks of 8,000-foot peaks. Well over a century has passed since glittering, golden Aurora rode the unruly waves of fame and fortune. Though her "glory days" spanned but a decade, the great mining camp sprang into a stylish city; became the seat of both Inyo County, California and Esmeralda County, Nevada; while her mines feverishly produced over 30 million dollars from rich ores.

Many are the legends about Aurora and her story has been chronicled in numerous journals and books. The need for recreation has increased and new hobbyists have taken up the age-old hobbies of bottle, rock and memorabilia collecting, photography and ghost town hopping. These "new treasures" are all to be found at Aurora.

From the north, east, south and west, four main roads lead to Aurora. They are old, historical routes and the saying, "All roads lead to Aurora," seems fitting. A trip can be made even more interesting by choosing an alternate road on the way out. Our favorite is the south road up Cottonwood Canyon to Bodie, then east along Bodie Creek through Del Monte Canyon. It is a beautiful drive through narrow canyons and high plains in the Bodie Hills.

Cottonwood Canyon Road leaves State Highway 167, seven miles east of its junction with Highway 395, seven miles north of Leevining, California. A small sign "Bodie, 10 miles" points the way.

A good, graded road heads due north, then makes an abrupt 90-degree turn east and, in just over four miles, enters the picturesque canyon. Rock walls close in and, shortly, a stone-faced dugout will be seen on the right. It is believed to have been a tollhouse.

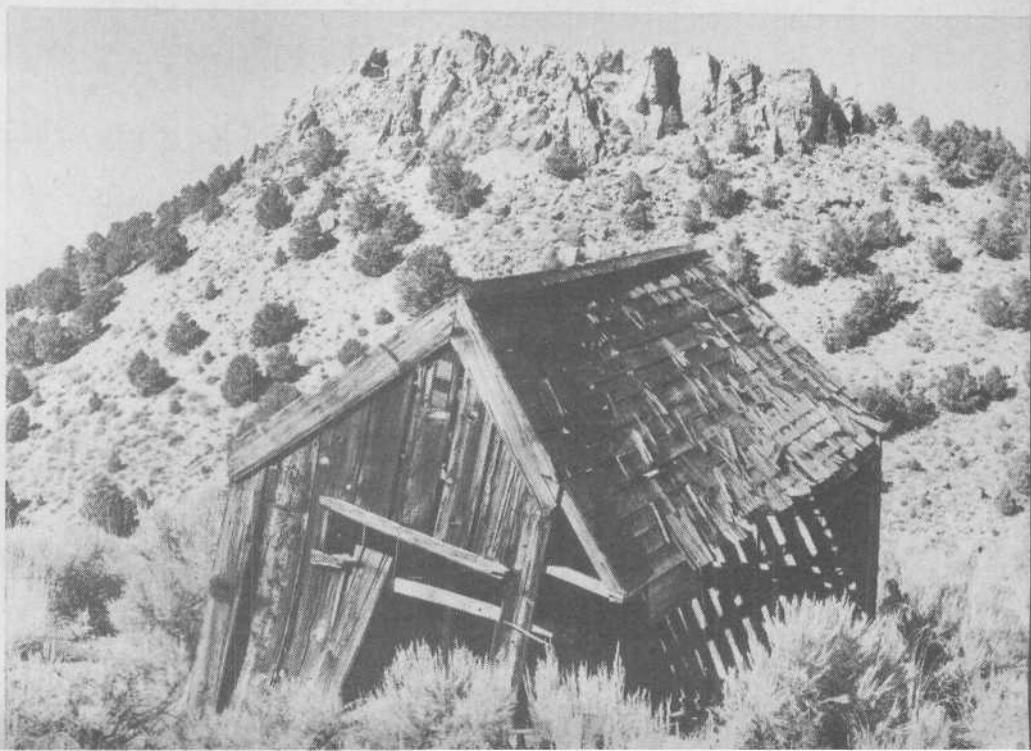
Toll roads were common in the early days and were built under a short-term, county franchise system. They provided needed wagon routes and profits for the builders, without cost to the newly-developing counties. Charges were generally nominal — five cents a mile for wagons and a cent or two for animals. Often, individual segments of a road

were completed by different leasees; consequently tolls were charged upon entering each section. Later, the more important toll roads became major routes in the county's network of highways.

The Cottonwood Canyon tollkeeper's cabin appears to have been comfortable though primitive. It has a nice stone fireplace and a metal roof held down by rocks and gravel. No doubt there have been many temporary occupants down through the years — including prospectors and hunters.

The canyon road winds with a natural drainage channel as it ascends to over

*Only a few shacks remain in the ghost town of Aurora. In the back ground is Aurora Creek Canyon. On the high, mesa-like ridge, geodes and jasp-agate will be found.*





*Glen Cash of Hawthorne has found many bottles at Aurora, including over a dozen "Lady's Legs" in fine condition. Like all bottle collectors should do, he is careful not to dig near ruins and fills all holes when he is finished.*

8,300 feet elevation at Bodie State Historic Park. If you have not roamed this old California mining town with its many photogenic buildings, a stop can be made. However, unless you are planning to camp overnight (and you should), there will not be enough time left for exploring Aurora.

From Bodie, a graded road continues

east around mine-covered Bodie's Bluff and passes the Syndicate Mill site. Ahead lies the still well-preserved Gray's Mill. It is easy to imagine the tremendous roar that must have reverberated through this little valley when all the mills were operating.

Just beyond Gray's Mill, adjacent to the road, stands the ruins of a very im-

pressive toll house. The floor and sections of wall remain and there is evidence of several other buildings. There was also probably a small saloon here. Dirt abutments on the south side of the road indicate the remnants of a large corral. The area is very photogenic.

Once again, the road turns north. If your trip is taken in the fall, you will find golden-hued rabbitbrush bursting with blooms. Canyon walls will be a patchwork quilt of autumn reds and yellows. Jack Frost does his work early in the high country. If you watch carefully on the right, over the next seven miles, you will see the rock work of an old toll road, well above Bodie Creek. You will also pass the ruins of a way-station on the left, just prior to entering "The Narrows" of Del Monte Canyon.

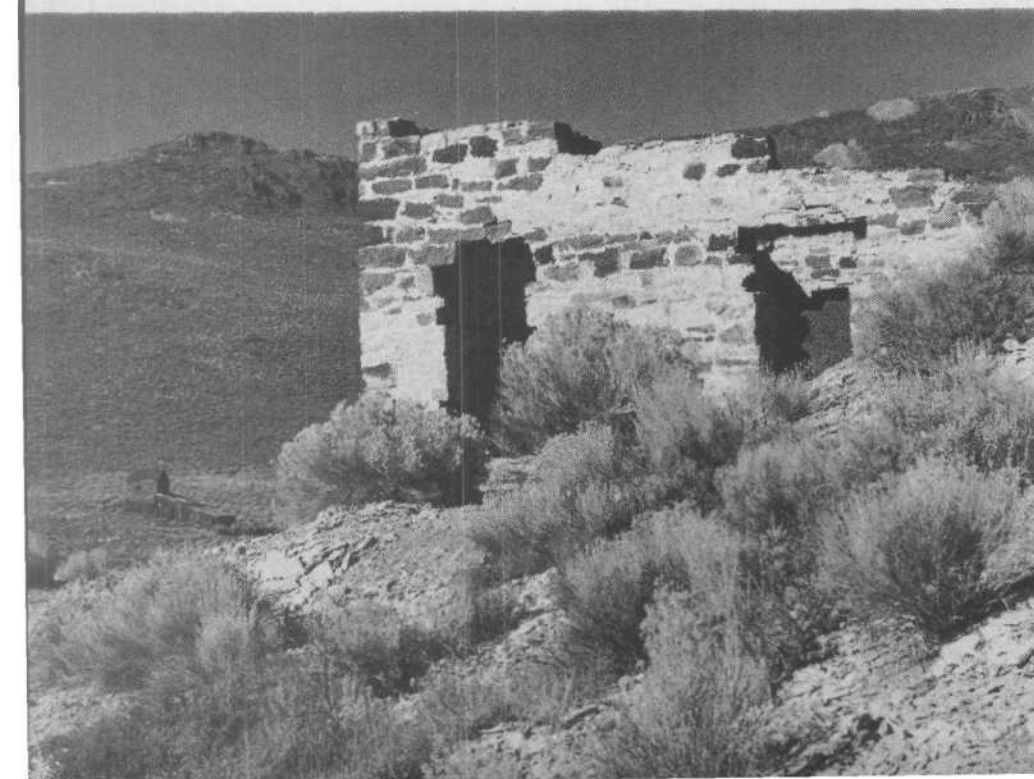
The road is reduced to one lane as it wanders through the high, rock-walled narrows. There are a few places to pass. Bodie Creek runs swiftly just below the road. In several places where a sharp curve is rounded, you can look straight down into a clear pool where trout lurk. Hillside springs provide small streams to ford and a narrow, one-lane, rickety, wooden bridge crosses Bodie Creek. It is not a dangerous section of road but one to drive slowly and carefully in order to enjoy the outstanding scenery.

Del Monte transformer station, 9.7 miles from Bodie, is a good place to stop for a coffee break. You are now almost within shouting distance of Aurora, which lies up the side canyon, one and one-half miles east. Unless further storms have added new boulders, a small, four-wheel-drive vehicle can probably negotiate the old short-cut up Aurora Creek. However, other vehicles must follow the main road.

Three miles beyond Del Monte, a sign indicates the graded road to Aurora off to the right. From this point, the road quickly tackles the mountains and in four and a half miles, climbs a thousand feet to the "City of Golden Dawn."

There is much to be seen along the way. Winding through a forest of pinyon pines, the road passes the remnants of great volcanic activity that occurred here eons ago. On the left is nine-square-mile Aurora Crater. Hidden by the forest, it is difficult to recognize as a crater. Colorful ash beds outcrop in places and, at one area near the road, a huge deposit of lava occurs. The flow lines resemble a

*Many historical sites are passed enroute to Aurora. Gray's Mill in the left center and a few of many dumps on Bodie's Bluff are visible beyond remnants of this tollhouse.*





Three miles from Bodie Road, a small valley is entered. At its center, a three-fork junction calls for a decision. Those heading to Aurora turn right. Later, you may enjoy taking the center road to explore the ruins of the Chesco Mine. The third fork is a 4WD trail leading around the east side of Aurora Crater to Mud Springs Canyon.

From three-forks, the road deteriorates somewhat. It climbs a hill where

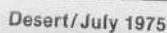
Not much remains where 10,000 people once flourished. Eighteen mills pounded day and night and a city of fine brick buildings had risen. A few wooden shacks, concrete and rock walls, brick walls and the dilapidated buildings of a small mill mark the site. There is one odd-looking, adobe building east of the

mill — the roof-pitch of which gives it the impression of being octagonal. Though the majority of streets in the old townsite are over-grown by brush, it is easily recognizable that Aurora has been a sizable community.

We wished we could have seen Aurora before the business section had been removed. It came to mind what the late Ocie Randall of Fresno, Calif., long-time friend and fellow rockhound, had told us. "My first trip to Aurora was in 1949

"My first trip to Aurora was in 1949. Nearly all the buildings were standing and it was a sight to behold. I was told

Continued on Page 39



# Baja California

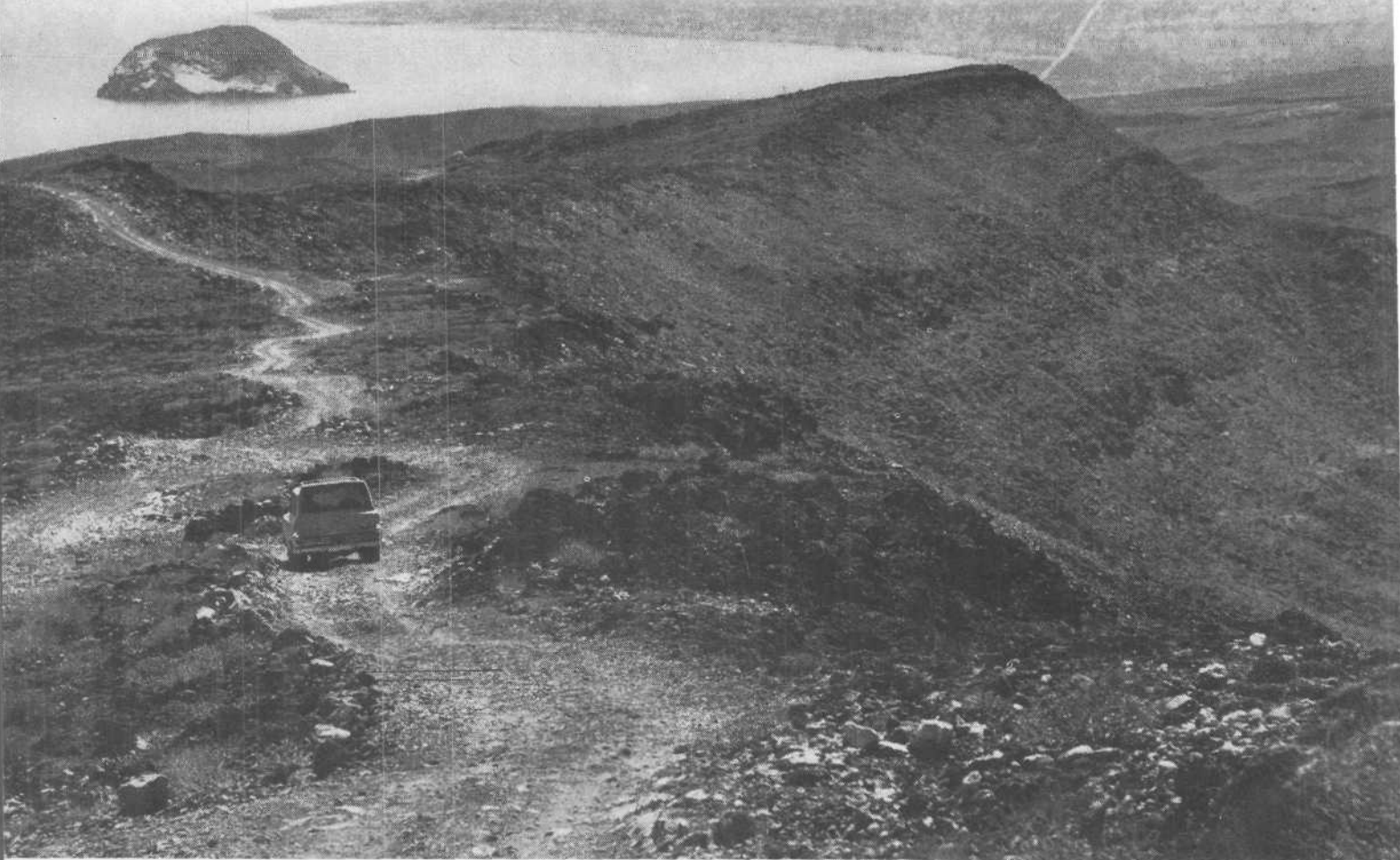
**The Magic Remains  
Despite the  
New Highway**

by THOS. L. BRYANT

*Left: The graveyard at El Marmol.  
Below: Mission San Borja.  
Opposite page: The road south  
from Puertecitos over the grade.*







THE OPENING of the paved highway in Baja California gave rise to a number of worries among the veteran travelers to this desert wonderland. Many an old-timer was heard to comment on the certainty of the landscape being filled with recreation vehicles, stopping for refreshment at hamburger stands and to paw among the treasures of Tijuana-like curio shops.

Fortunately, this has not come to pass, at least not yet, and Baja remains a mecca for the desert traveler who wants lots of space between himself and the next campsite. True, the towns along the route of the paved highway to La Paz are now growing less untainted as more and more U.S. visitors stop for *gasolina* and the paved highway itself does carry what seems an inordinate number of large recreation vehicles. But the *real* Baja, away from the towns and the pavement, is still there.

One of the more interesting and scenic journeys possible for the adventurer is a loop running from San Felipe on the east coast, down through Puertecitos, Gonzaga Bay, Bahia de Los Angeles, and then inland to Rosarito (not to be confused with the more northerly Rosarito

Beach), Punta Prieta, El Marmol and up the pavement to home. We made this journey recently and found that except for the run home on the pavement, it is little changed from the earlier trips we had made when the pavement was still in the talking stages.

San Felipe is a well-known resort on the Sea of Cortez, about 100 miles south of Mexicali. It is reached by paved Highway 5 out of the border city. San Felipe has played host to Americans for a number of years and is well equipped to provide foodstuffs and beverages for those who are going on to the south. It also marks the end of the paved highway and those who are going on should be prepared for primitive roads and driving conditions. In fact, it would be wise to have a good amount of off-pavement driving experience under your belt before striking out in Baja.

The road from San Felipe to Puertecitos is an easy drive through unspectacular but beautiful desert country, occasionally touching the coastline for a glimpse of the gulf. Puertecitos lies some 55 miles south of San Felipe and is also quite used to having "gringos" around as many have vacation homes

there overlooking the sea. It is also a popular spot for fishermen who find the Sea of Cortez relatively untouched and bountiful. Puertecitos boasts a restaurant for the hardy of spirit (and stomach) which serves typical local dishes and we have found the *chorizo* and eggs there quite tasty. There is also a gasoline station and topping off the tank is a good idea.

South from Puertecitos, the road becomes one of the stiffest tests of driving ability and patience as it traverses three mountain grades. It is slow going with rough, rocky stretches and sheer drop-offs, but the rewards are many. The crossing of each of the grades is climaxed with a small beach where a refreshing dip in the warm gulf waters can do much to restore body and spirit. Also, at one of the beaches, we were fortunate to happen upon a school of dolphins cavorting near the shore and putting on quite a show for anyone who happened along.

After crossing the grades, the road runs parallel to the coast into Gonzaga Bay. This is the domain of "Papa" Fernandez, an elderly gentleman who sells *gasoline* and *cerveza* (beer) as well as



*Ruins of original Mission San Borja, built in 1762.*

other foodstuffs. Gonzaga Bay is a natural inlet and shelter for pleasure and fishing boats, with its red rock formations growing from the blue gulf waters. Camping in the area is common practice and for a small fee to Papa, you can camp by the bay and use it for swimming and washing off the trail dust.

Leaving Gonzaga Bay, the road wanders inland into some of the most gorgeous desert scenery found in Baja, with elephant trees and cacti marking the path to Calamague Wash. This is a spring-fed arroyo with water year 'round for the cattle and desert animals of the area. It is a splendid spot for catching a glimpse of the occasional coyote and wild burros that generally remain in hiding or at least at a safe distance from the traveler.

After passing through Calamague Wash, the road leads you to the paved highway and it's a short run south to the intersection of the road leading to Bahia de Los Angeles. The road into L.A. Bay is now paved, making it a quick 45-minute drive from the north-south highway but also opening it to many more visitors than in the past. While that is good for the motel-restaurant owner there, Senor Diaz, we experienced a slight amount of sadness in seeing a large motorhome heading in as we were leaving the next day.

Bahia de Los Angeles has long been a favorite fishing spot for flyers who are adventurous enough to cross the border and land in the middle of town on a dirt strip. It has always been common but still unusual to find a small airplane parked next to your vehicle in front of the motel or in line at the gasoline pumps.

The beaches around L.A. Bay offer open and free camping spots for those who are willing to pass up a shower and a bed, not to mention a change from campstove cooking. The motel-restaurant is clean and pleasant with good food included in the price of a night's lodging (\$24 U.S. for a couple in the fall of '74).

The most southerly destination on our loop trip was the mission at San Borja which lies about 35 miles from L.A. Bay. There is a sign about 15 miles west of L.A. Bay which marks the turnoff to *Mission San Borja* and claims it's 16 miles away. Well, it's closer to 22 miles but the scenery enroute is so outstanding you won't mind the difference. The road, however, is in very poor condition and

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should be attempted only with four-wheel-drive vehicles along.

The mission was first erected in 1762 but the first buildings did not withstand the desert weather. A later building was put up and still remains in reasonably good condition although San Borja was abandoned as a mission site in 1818. The Mexican government is currently funding a restoration project of the latter mission. There are a few families who still live nearby and will probably come to see who is visiting the ruins but they are quite friendly and rather shy and will not bother the visitor.

Continuing from San Borja, we took the back road out to the paved highway through semi-arid ranch country to Rosarito. If time is running short, it's a straight shot up the highway to Ensenada and Tijuana and the U.S. border. Since we had another day remaining in our four-day itinerary, we detoured from Santa Ynez on the pavement out to the abandoned onyx quarry at El Marmol. The trip takes only a few hours and although the roads are in rather sad condition we have driven them in a small Japanese pickup without problems.

El Marmol was in operation until 1958 but the price of onyx dipped and transportation costs became unbearable, so the quarry was shut down. It boasts a schoolhouse constructed entirely of onyx and still in good condition. Most of the other buildings have collapsed or been torn down by local residents of the area for building supplies. There is a cemetery not too far from the schoolhouse with a number of elaborate gravestones and a surprising lack of onyx.

There is a different road which heads northwest from El Marmol and takes the traveler back to the pavement and the trip home.

The splendor of the desert is alive and well in Baja California and the paved highway has not destroyed this land for the vacationer who wants isolation and freedom from the crowds. In fact, the paved highway has helped us "old-timers" in some ways in making the more remote spots we enjoy a bit easier to get to. Travel in Baja is so rewarding for the desert buff, not only for the scenic wonder and beauty, the rock hunting, the fishing, the camping, but also for the restoration of the spirit from being miles away from the crowds and rush of modern living. □



*The road from Santa Ynez to El Marmol onyx quarry.*

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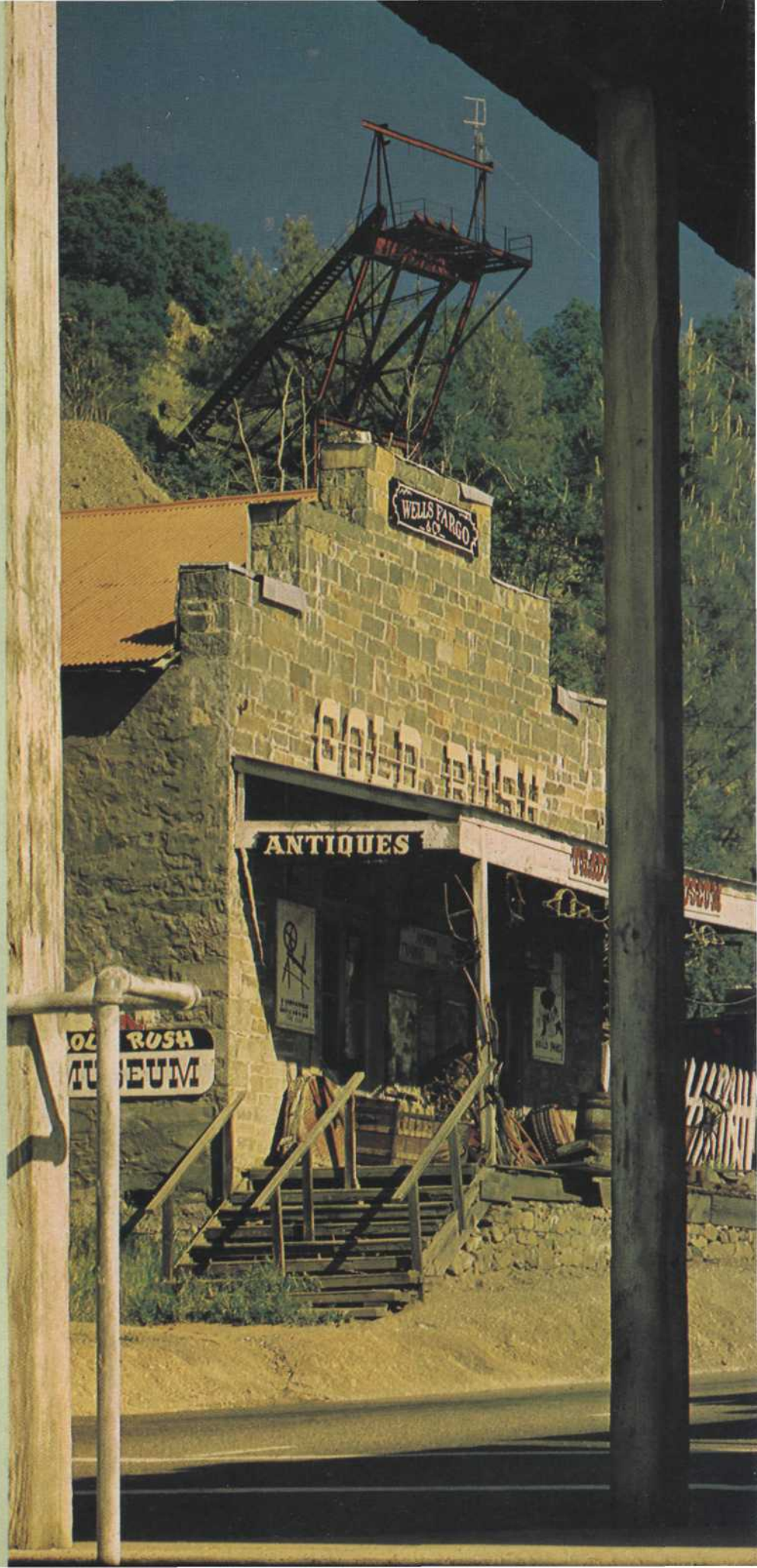
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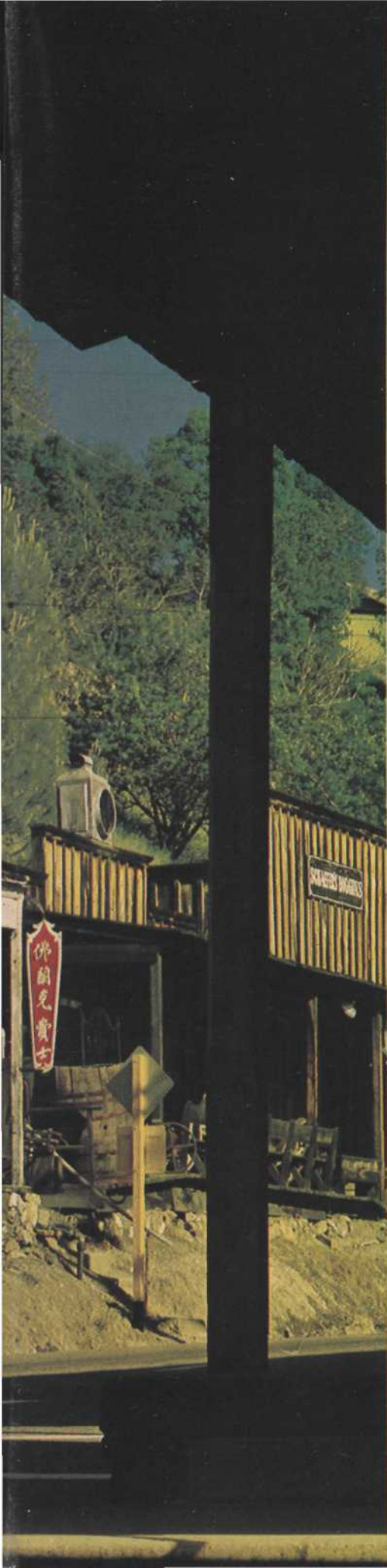
# On the Gold Rush Trail

by JACK PEPPER

*Amador City storefronts  
in California's Mother Lode Country.  
Photo by David Muench.*







## EDITOR'S NOTE

WHAT FINER TRIBUTE CAN  
BE PAID TO A MAN THAN  
TO SAY HE GAVE HIS ALL.  
EVEN THOUGH GRAVELY  
ILL THE AUTHOR DICTATED  
THE FINAL PAGES OF THIS  
ARTICLE FROM HIS HOSPI-  
TAL BED TO MAKE HIS  
FINAL DEADLINE.

■ HAVE FOUND IT! Eureka!" Archimedes, the Greek scientist, shouted these words in 247 B.C. after discovering what he thought was a method of determining the purity of gold.

It is doubtful if any Argonaut panning for gold in 1849 in California's Mother Lode Country shouted the same words after striking a bonanza of the yellow metal. His words were certain to have more expletive.

However, Archimedes' remarks did not just go down in history books, for in 1850, when California gained its statehood, the official motto was "Eureka."

Today, the merchants, traders and residents along Highway 49, which runs 300 miles through the Mother Lode Country (excluding the Northern Section), can once again shout "Eureka," for they have found a new form of gold.

My last visit to the Mother Lode Country was in 1970 (see *Desert*, Sept., 1970). Since it was my first visit I didn't know what to expect. And, like any *tourista*, I wasted time at places that should have been just brief stops, missing many of the off-the-beaten-path places of interest not publicized as much as the main attractions.

I think one of the biggest mistakes of travel books on the Mother Lode is their emphasis on old buildings and photography. Granted, it is a photographer's paradise, but if you concentrate only on snapping a photo to take home to show your neighbors, or look at only the more

spectacular ghost town ruins, you are missing 50 per cent of the moods and feeling of the Gold Rush Country. For the Mother Lode is a land of moods — moods which cannot be captured by stopping alongside the road, and with the engine running, snapping a picture and then rushing on to the next "historical marker."

So what if my family and I have only a few days, how do we see everything without a fast trip, you ask?

My answer to that is — don't try. Figure out just how much time you have and then pick one particular area (even if it is only a few square miles) and concentrate on that section. Don't fail to stop and go inside every shop and trading post that is open. The buildings are more than 100 years old, but inside you will find the interesting and hospitable modern-day Argonaut, casually and without any sales pressure, displaying Western American artifacts. These are the people who have discovered and understand the many moods of the Mother Lode.

As for the kids, the Mother Lode has a plethora of delicious bakery shops and ice cream parlors. Where once sweaty and unshaven miners paid for their "redeye" with nuggets, Junior can now mosey up to the same bar and yell, "Pardner, build me a double decker chocolate fudge banana split."

On my second trip, last year (1974), I found the mood of the Mother Lode one



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of extreme optimism, much more so than in 1970 when there was what merchants called a "slump." Today, everyone is busy and there are new trading posts and antique shops along the highway and in the four major "cities" of Mariposa, Sonora, Jackson and Placerville.

If you are driving a passenger car, these "cities" (and Columbia State Historic Park and the Coloma Historical Monument) are the only places where you can be certain to find hotel and motel accommodations. There are a few along the highway, but they are usually filled early.

I had no trouble finding space in the many public and private recreational facilities for my Blazer and travel trailer. Even if they are filled, there are hundreds of places along the road where you can pull over and make a "dry camp" for the night.

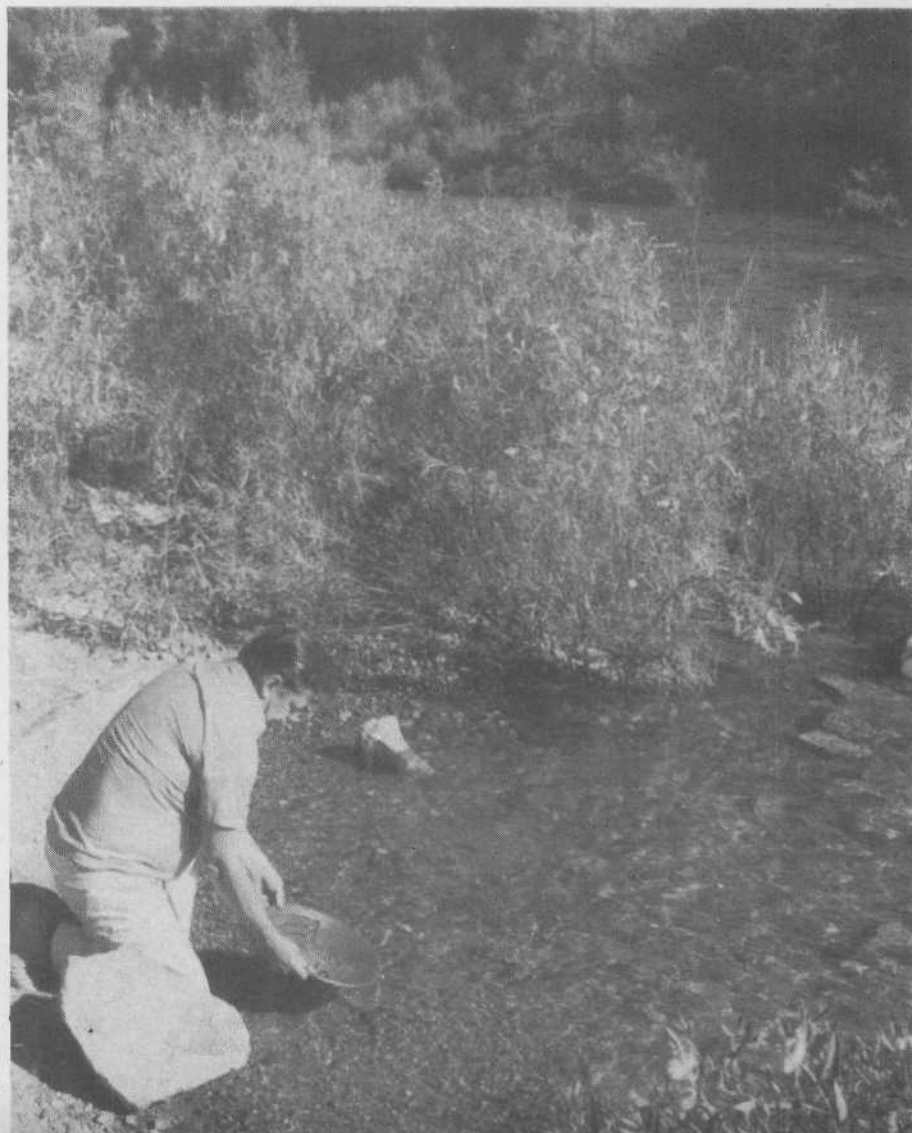
There are dozens of paved county and state roads leading into the Mother Lode and Highway 49. Choose the one that is most convenient from where you live and

the part of the Mother Lode you wish to see. I live in Southern California so I usually take the paved State 41 from Interstate 5 to Oakhurst and left on Highway 49 to Mariposa. Highways to nearby Yosemite National Park lead from Oakhurst and Mariposa.

There are many books on the Mother Lode but don't fail to have a copy of Sunset Travel Book *Gold Rush Country*. This excellent travel guide contains maps, pictures, side road trips, detailed histories of each locale, and vignettes of the famous — and infamous characters of Gold Rush Days. I recommend a copy for every two passengers in your car.

Since the *Gold Rush Country* provides the history, facts, and figures about Highway 49, let's concentrate on the interesting modern-day Argonaut and how we found little-known areas.

In Mariposa, your first stop should be the two-story wooden Mariposa County Courthouse, which was built in 1854 at a cost of \$12,000 and has been in continuous use since the doors first opened.







Indian Grinding Rock State Historical Monument features the largest bedrock mortar in the United States. Located near Volcano, it is a beautiful overnight camping area nestled among the pine trees. Complete camping facilities [no store] are available. Opposite page: Author pans for gold in the American River where the famous Gold Rush started. Coloma is now a state park and offers excellent facilities.

Cases are tried before judges sitting on the bench where justice was dispensed more than 120 years ago.

The Mariposa County History Center, sponsored by the Mariposa County Historical Society, on Jessie Street at the north end of town, is an outstanding example of how the modern Argonauts are bringing new life — and originality — to the Mother Lode.

In my 1970 article, I did not mention the History Center. I didn't know if they even had one. Last year everyone urged me to, "See our outstanding museum." Don't fail to stop and spend at least two hours there.

It is not a "museum" in the deadly sense of the word. Rather, as the self-guided tour brochure states: "With this History Center we present an authentic picture of people and life in Mariposa County, from the migration of its first inhabitants, through the Indian and Spanish periods, to the famed California Gold Rush, to the recent past."

A 49er miner, Horace Snow from Agua Fria, wrote a series of letters, in 1852 to 1854, to Charlie, his life-long friend in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The letters were so graphic they gave a keen insight into the personal and daily lives of the Argonauts. These letters became known as the "Dear Charlie" letters and for awhile were lost; however, they were recently found.

When officials decided to redesign the Historical Center, they called upon the services of Muriel Neavins, a well-known Northern California display artist. As soon as Miss Neavins saw the "Dear Charlie" notes, she cried, "Eureka! I have found it!"

She had the letters decoupage and then placed each letter in a different display room with various scenes of the Gold Rush country over a hundred years ago. For instance, when Horace was talking about his bedroom, her display was built around his very graphic description. She related the letters to each display, thus making this the most dramatic presentation I have seen in any museum.

A recent donation to the Center was the merchandise and paraphernalia from the famous Gagliardo store in Hornitos by Miss Jennie Gagliardo, who died at the age of 90. The following day in Hornitos we had the pleasure of meeting the last descendant of the Gagliardo family. She was an attractive 21-year-old outdoor, ranch-type girl. She was leaving Hornitos since she had married a rancher in Sacramento. When we asked her if she was reluctant to leave, she replied, "My family has lived here for more than a 100 years, but my husband and I will continue to follow the pioneer spirit."

Prior to leaving the Center, we learned

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about the historical background of the Mother Lode country.

The discovery of gold in California changed the history of the United States and had lasting financial repercussions throughout the world. Within two years after the 1848 discovery of gold at the American River, tens of thousands of Argonauts — the largest migration in world history — poured into what the Mexicans named "veta madre," meaning Mother Lode because of the incredibly rich quartz veins.

Oriental came from the East, jammed into boats, many of which were lost at sea, drowning all of their scurvy-ridden passengers. Easterners and Europeans came by a 15,000-mile sailing trip around the Cape of Good Hope or by a "short cut" across the Isthmus of Panama, suffering malaria and oppressive heat. The majority, however, came overland, a 3,000-mile trek where thousands lost their lives from thirst, cholera or Indian raids.

One month after gold was discovered, the United States took possession of California as a result of the Mexican War. Ninety per cent of the 15,000 pop-

ulation resided in or near four presidios: San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Francisco.

Five years later, there were 250,000 "Californians" and the casual Mexican life-style was a thing of the past. Far-sighted northern politicians, anticipating a possible conflict with the South, made California a state in 1850. Millions of dollars of Mother Lode gold thus poured into the Union treasury. This bonanza was a major factor in the outcome of the Civil War.

Historians agree that if it were not for the discovery of gold in 1848, California would have been an agricultural territory for many years and settled gradually as were the other territories of the West.

But the discovery of the gold nugget at Sutter's Mill set the stage for one of the most dramatic episodes in history. The drama was like a Cecil B. DeMille extravaganza. In the background were tens of thousands living in shacks and stone huts, panning for gold from dawn to dusk in the freezing water of the mountain streams and rivers. During the first two years after discovery, gold could be found everywhere, and miners often shared their claims.

But the influx of "outsiders" boomeranged in 1851, claims overlapped and every yard of ground was taken. Claim jumping was a common occurrence, resulting in violence and murder. White miners, claiming the Mexicans and Chinese were "foreigners," formed vigilante groups and drove the minorities off their claims. If they resisted they were shot down in cold blood.

Along the stretch of the 300-mile Mother Lode, more than 550 mining towns were built to supply the miners with equipment, but mostly with food, booze and wild entertainment. More than 300 towns have completely disappeared.

Names of the "stars" of the extravaganza have become legends in California history. To name only a few were General James C. Fremont, Kit Carson and George Hearst. Jenny Lind and Lola Montez made brief appearances before going on to greater fame. Joaquin Mur-

rieta was one of the West's most colorful outlaws, as was highwayman Black Bart. A "gentleman" who was always immaculately dressed, complete with hat and gloves, he staged 28 coach robberies, using a shotgun he never loaded.

Many of the Bret Harte stories were based on his experiences in the Mother Lode Country. Every May, during the



*Between Hornitos  
and Bear Valley  
can be seen miles of neatly built  
stone fences, believed  
to have been built by the Chinese.*

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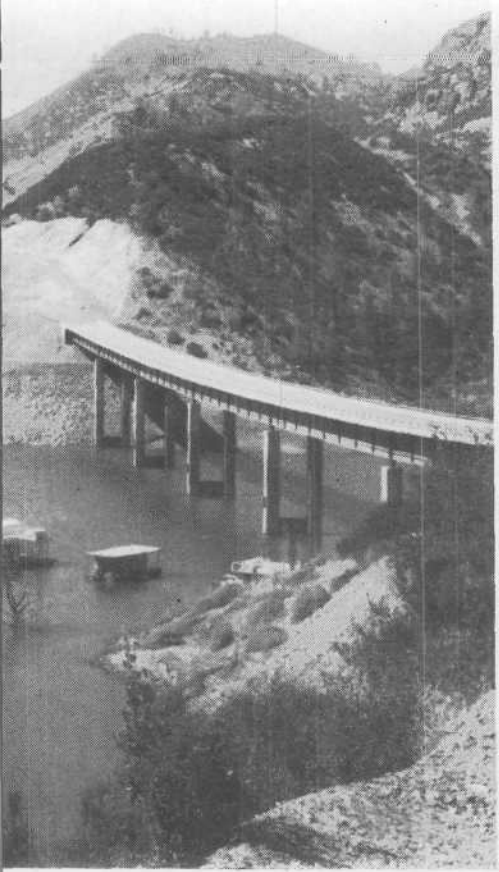
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Calaveras County Fair, a frog jumping contest is held based on Mark Twain's famous story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County."

The drama lasted only 12 action-packed years when the curtain came down, leaving the Mother Lode with only a few thousand miners. As the gold gave out, huge mining interests were formed,



One of many scenic recreational areas which Highway 49 passes along the Mother Lode.

buying up individual claims. The day of the rugged Argonauts was over, although large scale mining operations continued for years.

From Mariposa, be sure to take the side trip to Hornitos (once the rowdiest town on the 49 trail). It is rich in history and colorful anecdotes, having been founded by Mexican miners who had been run out of neighboring Quartzburg. Have lunch there at the little restaurant and listen to the wild tales of their favorite outlaw, Joaquin Murrieta. Enjoy the loop-ride through beautiful country, noticing the winding, hand-laid rock walls separating the land sections. These walls were built by Chinese coolie laborers who were paid the tremendous sum of 25 cents a rod.

Follow the Bear Valley Road into Coulterville and stop for a cold drink at the old Jeffery Hotel and Magnolia Saloon. You will be enchanted by one of the best collection of firearms, minerals, coins and other Gold Rush items we have seen outside of a museum.

Across the street was another modern-day pioneer. A lovely, gracious ex-ranch woman, Georgia Newhall. And I say "ex-rancher" for Georgia had lived on a ranch for 58 years and is now a successful business woman running an unusual store. Unusual in the sense that it is a fun store, both for the customers and Georgia. You never know what you might uncover in this shop! In talking to this fascinating woman, we discovered how she started this new life for herself.

Georgia had a habit of never throwing

anything away, and after years of accumulating "odds and ends," her husband offered to pay the first three months rent on a shop for her "Treasure Troves" if she would clean out all the paraphernalia, junk, antiques, treasures, old bottles, old frames, etc., and open up a shop. He had a two-fold plan — he could get the garage, shed, out-buildings and attic cleaned, and Georgia could have some fun — but the idea backfired, for now Georgia is doing a business that is growing by leaps and bounds.

All the farmers, ranchers and friends are bringing her their "white elephants" to sell on consignment and she is loving every minute of it. But most of all she has a natural love for people and a trust and graciousness that has opened up a new personality and life for this modern-day Argonaut of Coulterville. I bought a beautiful crystal for my rock collection for all of 50 cents. This rock had been brought in by one of her consigners and, according to him, the crystal was from the "Moon Trip." She repeated this story about the "moon rock" with a twinkle in her eye and a shy, sweet smile. After all, treasure is in the eye of the beholder. What is one man's junk is another man's treasure!

All the 360-mile trip on Route 49 was made with the excitement of re-living this exciting history over 100 years ago in a wild and uproarious time, but the most important were the interesting and unusual modern-day Argonauts living along this route. All you have to do is take an extra few minutes to say hello, ask a couple of questions and you have another exciting story—try it on your next trip. □

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Left: Bottles from left to right, according to Larry O'Malley, the collector, are: beer, whiskey, catsup, "pumpkin seed," wine, and an original "No deposit, no return" beer bottle.

Below: The O'Malley family look for antique bottles trapped by sand at the base of desert bushes in a dry wash. Early gold miners dumped their rubbish here.

# Here Comes The

**A**CROSS THE DESERTS, into the mountains, over the plains and down to the ocean's edge, like swarms of ants, go the bottle collectors. Poking around ancient structures from which the paint has long since vanished; digging in old trash dumps on a home-

stead's farm; even excavating the sites of old outhouses — seemingly, no place is too indelicate for the bottle scroungers.

The craze for collecting antique bottles has spread rapidly to all corners of the country; witness the bottle shows; the bottle-stocked shelves of antique

dealers; the flea market bottle sellers. And it's safe to say, 100,000 homes display combinations of squat bottles, tall bottles, round bottles, flat bottles, triangular bottles; blue, brown, clear, amber, emerald green or amethyst bottles; dug up, purchased dearly, or horse-traded.

Just about everyone knows what a bottle is. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* describes it as being a rigid or semi-rigid container in which liquid is held. It can be a jar, a tumbler, jug, vial, ampoule or carboy.

Earliest bottles were made from gourds, shells or animal skins. Later ones were formed from clay, molten glass or carved from pine logs.

The Egyptians and Syrians have been making glass bottles for more than 3,000 years. The early Egyptian method was to wind molten glass strings around a core of silica paste on a metal rod, or by dipping the core into molten glass. The silica paste was dug out after the glass had hardened. The collecting of these ancient specimens has long been the privilege of archaeologists.

In 1850, manganese was introduced to





Right:  
Larry O'Malley  
examines part of  
a jar which he dug  
up at an abandoned  
gold mine dump site  
on the California  
Desert.



# Bottle Brigade

by IVA L. GEISINGER

glass to bleach out iron oxides, but this practice was discontinued in 1914. When glass of this period has been exposed to sunlight for about five to eight years, it turns various shades of purple, producing the much sought after "amethyst" bottles.

The true bottle collector knows his bottles inside out. He knows how his find was formed: free blown, blown in a two-piece mold or a three-piece mold, or made in a turn mold. He can approximate its age by its height, shape of its neck and top and other characteristics.

But anyone can start collecting bottles with a minimum of bottle facts, though the digging collector should cultivate a few detective instincts. John Cleveland, past president of the Mission Trail Historical Bottle Club of the Monterey Peninsula, recently suggested to a beginner: "Arm yourself with a metal detector, a spading fork, a spring steel probing rod and a shovel, and venture forth into bottle-land." The rest of the tools seemed logical enough but, "why the metal detector for glass bottles?" I asked. Cleveland patiently explained that usually old bottles are to be found in

conjunction with all kinds of buried refuse — including metal. Find the metal in a buried dump and the bottles will be there too.

The probing rod appears to be one of the most popular tools of the hobby. Push the probe down into the earth of a likely area and listen for the clinking sound of glass. When you've been bitten by the antique bottle collecting bug (no doubt a close kin to the bug which brings on rockhound fever), that sound becomes heavenly music to your ears.

Collecting old bottles is especially interesting because it is possible to play the role of amateur archaeologist and roughly reconstruct a period of a family's history. By its shape, color, size and embossing, a knowledgeable collector can usually give an educated guess as to what a bottle once contained. For example, ink bottles are fairly easy to identify because of their small, squat size. And whiskey, beer and wine bottles had their own particular recognizable styles.

Say you're digging in an old ghost town, behind the shack in which a miner and his family once lived. You uncover

what must have been a small fortune in wine or whiskey bottles, so you feel sorry for poor Mama because she had an alcoholic husband on her hands. Though it wasn't too unusual for it to be the other way around; Mama was the alcoholic. Back then, she was usually pretty straight-laced so she didn't realize she was hooked on medicines, many of which were high in alcoholic content. Medicine bottles abound in old dumps. However, an unusually large cache of medicine bottles may, instead, indicate much illness in the family.

A sizable collection of scent bottles reveals a feminine presence — possibly young, pretty and self-centered, or maybe just unsure of herself. Then again, she may have been just plain lazy and didn't bathe often. See what games our imaginations can play with old bottles?

To help stretch a miner's meager pay, Mama did a lot of home canning — the old fruit jars will be there to prove it.

As you dig in the old townsite's refuse dump, you will probably run across the usual hodge-podge collection of bottles.

Continued on Page 40

# RAFTING ON



AMERICA'S RIVERS in recent years have become infested with rafts of every description, filled with eager thrill-seekers in quest of the ultimate rapid. But the pleasures of a float trip should not be measured by the ratings of rapids alone. The meanest rapid on Utah's San Juan River is rated three on a scale of one to ten. One, Grandma could survive it on a rubber duck; and ten, be sure your last will and testament are in order.

We, too, have followed the big-time white water trail in the past and found it thrilling indeed, but we opted for the more tranquil, and hence, less popular San Juan this year so that more of our energy and attention could be devoted to observation and exploring and less to hanging on for dear life.

Our first task was to get a vehicle down 19 miles of rugged dirt road past Goulding's Trading Post to Piute Farms. Here, in a far corner of Monument Valley, our journey would end. This in itself is enough to deter many would-be adventurers. The need for absolute self-reliance and specialized equipment not available in every discount store eliminates many others. But to us this is as it should be, and is part of the attraction of such a venture.

Along with 115 miles of chocolate pudding-colored water between Bluff, Utah and Piute Fams, there is spectacular scenery, prehistoric cliff dwellings, old and recent mining sites and a variety of uncommon flora and fauna as well as quiet sand bars and the absence of other people.

But traveling in areas devoid of other human beings requires careful preparation and a certain amount of expertise in raft handling. Just as the river was the veritable life's blood of the region's prehistoric cliff dwellers, it was also ours for a while. Escaping the canyon by any other means would in many sections be a very perilous undertaking.

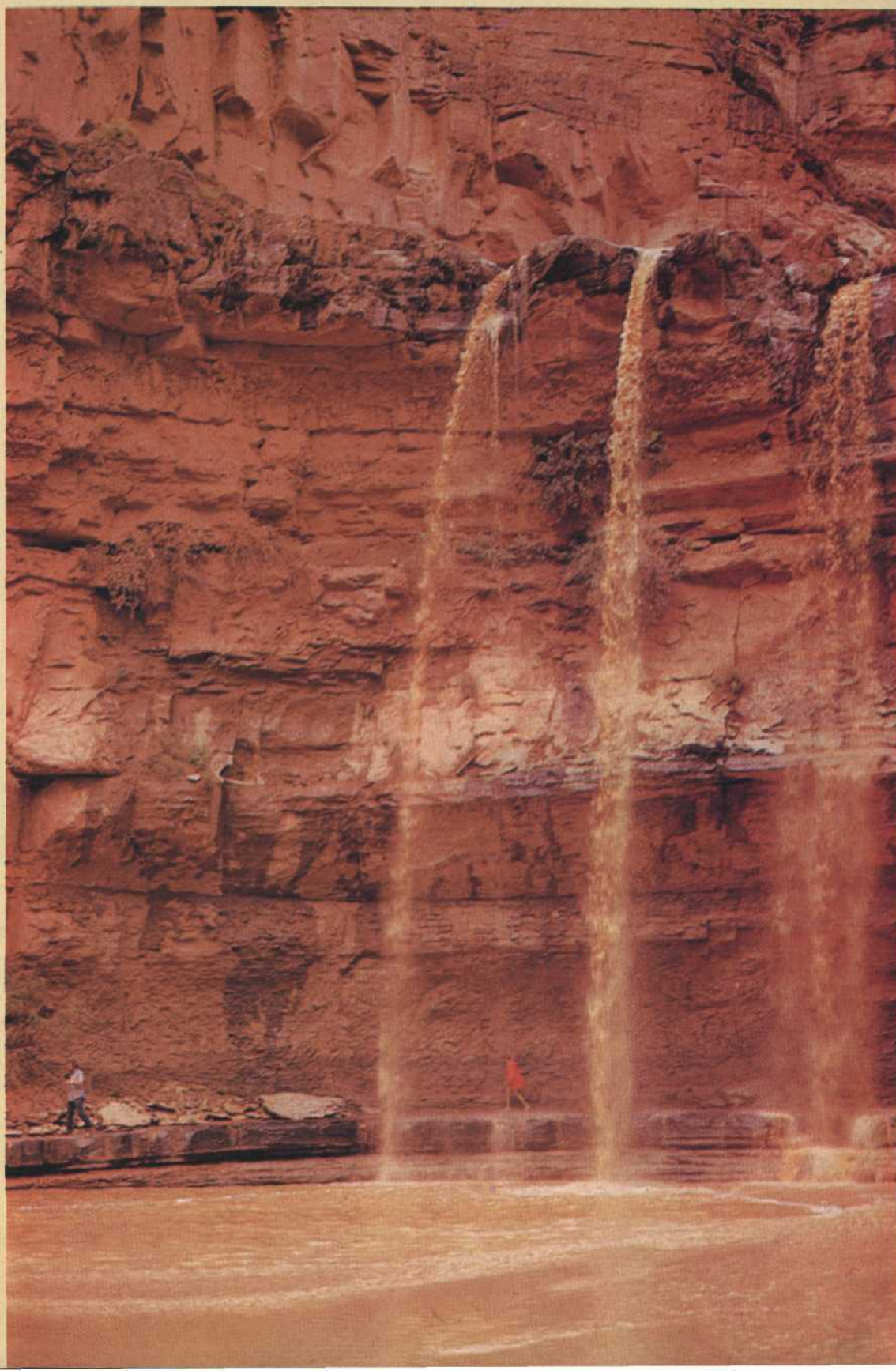
The raft our husbands constructed for



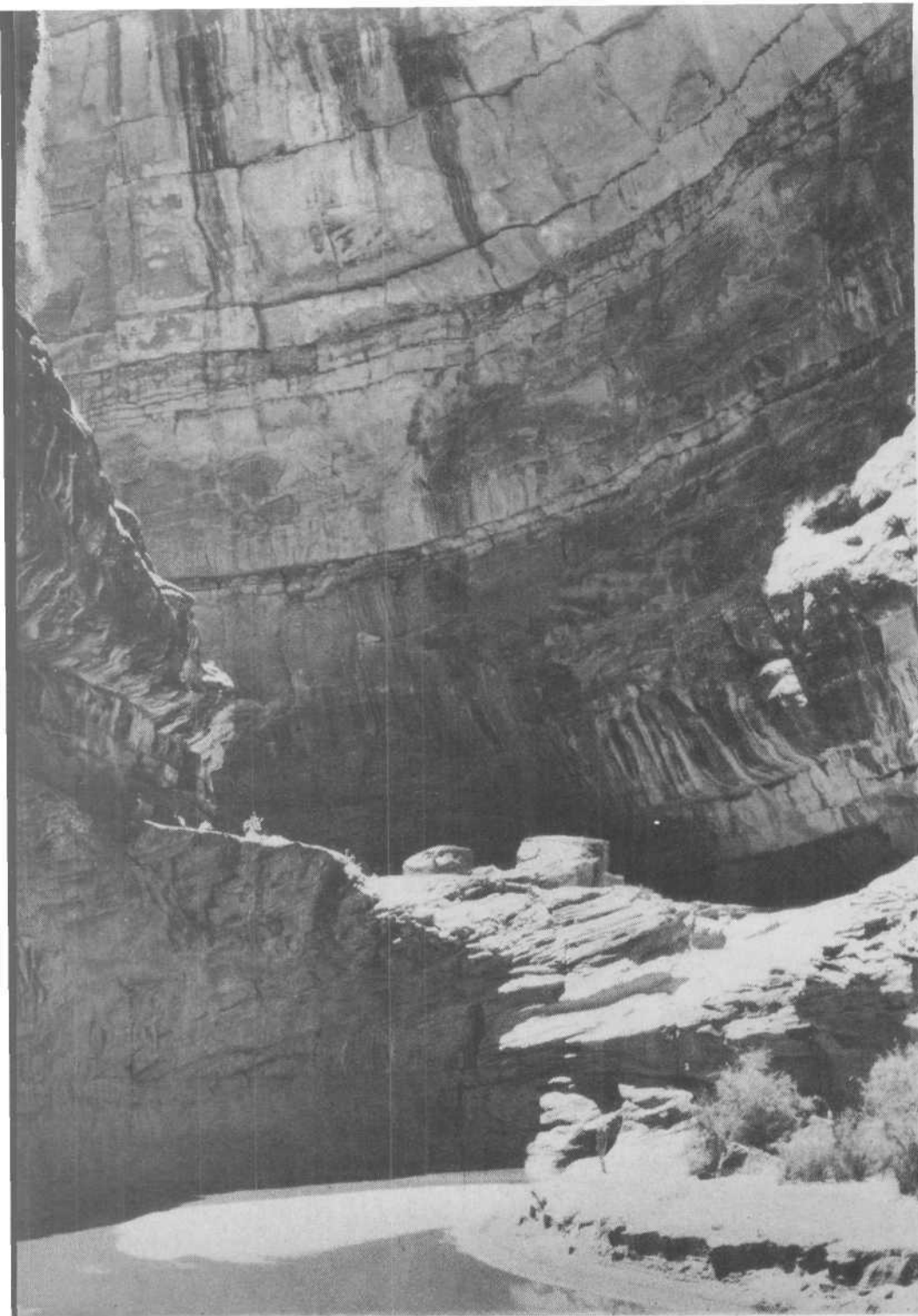
# THE SAN JUAN

by JEAN GILLINGWATERS  
and KATHERINE DIENES

*Top left: Most folk  
who travel along the river  
take time to explore  
the old cliff dwellings.  
Bottom left: The boys  
tie down the supplies  
in preparation  
for the day's journey.  
Right: Upper canyon  
rains created this  
red waterfall,  
which diminished to a trickle  
by the next morning.*







*Water- and wind-carved amphitheater provided background for lunch stop.*

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the float trip was made of two huge, rubber sausage-like pontoons. Chains and a metal framework topped with plywood decking provided stability for the twisting tubes. The lower center section gave us ample room for the storage of provisions and gear for five people. Steering the hulking craft was accomplished by two long sweeps mounted fore and aft. For power we relied entirely on the river which served well until we drifted into the reach of Lake Powell. Then we resorted to pulling, rowing, and using makeshift sails; but progress was deadly slow. Fortunately, we had only

two or three miles of lake to cover.

The geography of the San Juan River began 25 million years ago in the Miocene Era. With its headwaters in the San Juan Mountain Range in Colorado, the San Juan flows south through a corner of New Mexico, then west to its end in Glen Canyon, which is now drowned by Lake Powell.

As it passes through Bluff, Utah, our departure point, the river is characterized by a steady current, sand bars, and a shelf-like shore where considerable farming is carried on. Then a few miles further down, the canyon narrows to a deeply incised valley. As the water cuts downward through terrain which is predominately sandstone, the rate of drop increases to seven and eight feet per mile. At times the river gives the striking illusion of a steep downhill grade because of horizontal upthrusts in the layered canyon walls.

Traveling a red desert river is an overwhelmingly visual experience in several mind-bending dimensions. In the intense sunlight the eye must cope with immense vermilion cliffs balanced precariously against profoundly blue skies. But as one tries to adjust to the enormity of his surroundings, the vibrant colors and delicate geometry of miniature forms in desert life compete for the eye's attention. The stark linear patterns of seemingly frail desert plants in blued and yellowed shades of green pose in subtle counterpoint against the softness of coral-colored sand. It is a keenly felt pleasure to struggle with the infinite contrasts.

Other thoughts came to us as we knelt in ancient cliff dwellings and sifted powdered earth yielding potshards, stone chips and bits of charcoal through our hands. We wondered about the Basketmaker Indians who lived above the river here and labored and mysteriously left long before Columbus was born. We pondered picture messages they had left us graven on the cool stone walls and tried to decipher the thoughts of those who made them. We sat in their kivas and studied their rock-bound canyon attempting to see it as they did.

There is a substance to the shadows and the solitude of places so little seen by man. It is as though a bit of time can be taken into one's hand, examined in detail and filed in a memory pocket to be carefully sealed away against the tedium



of future days in the din of civilization.

We poked among the artifacts of later men who came here to probe the earth for minerals and metals and tried to reconstruct their days and dreams, successes and disillusionments. The carcasses of dead machinery erode slowly in the sand. Lizards sun themselves on abandoned steam engines, assorted pumps, and tobacco boxes oblivious to the great enterprises of *homo sapiens*.

We camped on satin-smooth sand at sites furnished variously with cottonwoods, tamarisk and other desert plants. Pesky thunderstorms found us several times on the river or in camp, but they were sometimes welcome relief from the intensity of the sun. Being ecology conscious we took care to leave each place as we found it so that others may enjoy the same untrammelled wilderness.

We floated past beaver whose surprise at seeing us was exceeded only by our own. We raced with wild ducks that were determined not to be out-run by any unidentified floating objects while weather-carved sandstone sculptures such as Mexican Hat and Lollipop Rock stood as stolidly for us as they must have for the first humans to pass beneath them.

We stopped awestruck to see a red waterfall hurtling itself into the river. Heavy upper canyon rains and runoff fed the torrent which by the next morning was greatly diminished. These daily storms added more and more silt to the already mud-red water which required repeated straining and settling to make it potable. Even then powdered drink mixes were added to camouflage it.

We selfishly enjoyed the luxury of having a river wilderness as our personal domain for a week. It is an experience that not every member of our urbane, creature-comfort-oriented society would voluntarily submit to and an opportunity even fewer are fortunate enough to have.

The challenge of practicing self-reliance, the pleasure of unhurried enjoyment of nature, the restorative effects of days unregulated by sacred schedules and domineering machines were like a screen through which each of us quietly sifted the events and values and aspirations which comprise the framework of our lives. It was a subtly transcendental experience in that each of us returned to our frenetic world with a surer sense of the natural priorities of things and our own place within them. ☐

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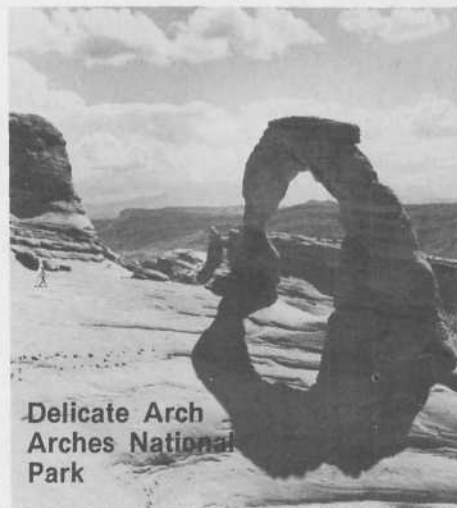
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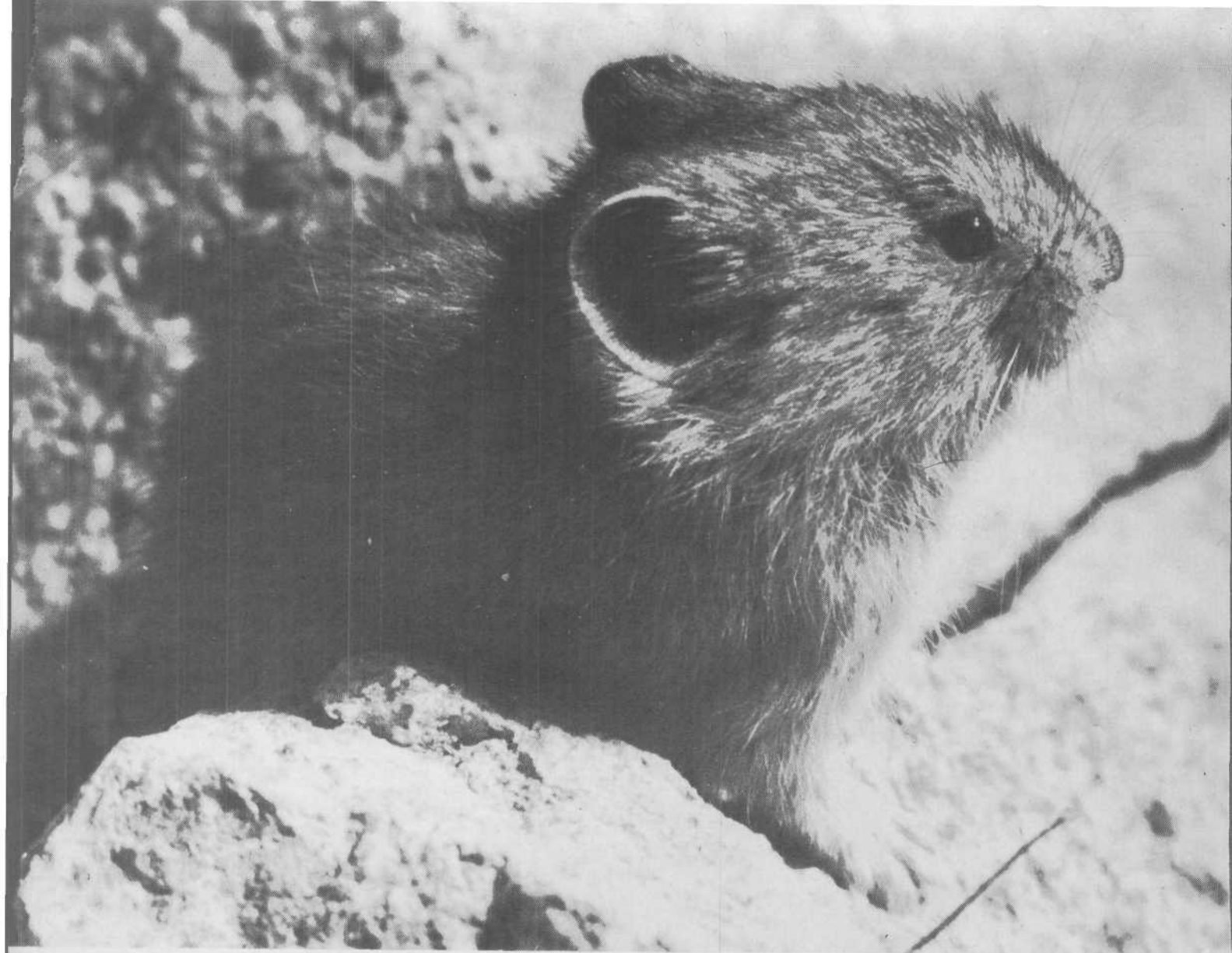
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*Often erroneously called cony, the cute little fellow known as the pika is closely related to the cottontail and jackrabbit.*

# The Haymaker

by JIM CORNETT

**H**IGH ATOP the rugged mountains of Nevada's Great Basin Desert live some of the West's least known mammals, the pikas. So remote is their habitat that few persons ever venture into this domain where immense, jagged rocks extend hundreds of feet above timberline. Even the ambitious naturalist who reaches such an area may have difficulty spotting these creatures who seek refuge in deep crevices. At least this was my experience as I accompanied

George Service and Desert Expeditions into the rugged Sweetwater Mountains of western Nevada.

Our campsite was established at tree line near the summit of Sweetwater Peak, a mountain reaching over 8,000 feet above the hot desert basins below. As we set camp shrill cries and squeaks from a nearby rockslide were our first indication that pikas were about. Approaching the talus slope, several tiny brown forms could be seen scuttling into crevices for protection.

As a member of the animal order known to scientists as *Lagomorpha*, the six- to eight-ounce pika is a close cousin to such familiar animals as the jackrabbit and cottontail. Yet with short, rounded ears, no visible tail, and a guinea pig-sized body, this chunky little fellow is in a family all his own. He looks more rodent than rabbit, but with a dual set of front teeth, one pair behind the other,



his kinship is obvious. Rodents have only one pair of incisors; hares, rabbits and pikas have two.

Although we at first had difficulty in viewing the pikas, we certainly never had problems hearing them. Unlike all other *Lagomorphs*, the pika has a well developed voice — a loud, high-pitched *Eek!* Beneath the boulder-strewn slopes the pikas call to each other, first one, then another some distance away. It is not known whether they are really communicating but the squeals can mislead an intruder, such as ourselves, who were trying to pinpoint the pika's location beneath tons of rock. Such a communal defense might be very effective against predators like the weasel as he attempts to locate a pika.

At times, pikas may go to great lengths in protecting their brethren from predators. Naturalist Joseph Dixon, while studying the pikas in Colorado, discovered that adults may endanger their own lives in attempting to protect other members of the colony. One morning, while standing on a heap of boulders in his study plot, Dixon was suddenly confronted with scores of shrill cries as seemingly every pika around him was

calling. Then, just as suddenly, the noise stopped and a dozen little heads popped up from the rocks peering intently for signs of trouble. Dixon felt sure an enemy was lurking somewhere but saw nothing until two forms flashed beneath his feet. It was a weasel in hot pursuit of a young pika vainly trying to escape. But just about the time the youngster was cornered an adult pika jumped from his lookout post and crossed right in front of the weasel's nose. The weasel, now confused, changed course and began pursuit of the adult pika allowing the youngster to escape. Dixon might have left the scene, musing at the good fortune of the younger animal and regretting the fate of the adult had he not witnessed another pika get into the chase. Once again a previously uninvolved pika crossed in front of the weasel diverting him from his victim, and again the weasel changed course, giving chase to the "fresh" pika. By the time a fourth pika entered the race the weasel was hopelessly exhausted and had to give up all pursuit. No lone weasel could match a team of pikas!

Pikas are successful animals, thriving in colonies which find approximately six

per acre in suitable habitats. Weasels, coyotes, and eagles take their share of pikas, but it is not these predators which control pika numbers. Tiny organisms, such as fleas, tapeworms and stomach worms occasionally infest pika colonies. During years of scant rainfall and little annual growth, pikas are forced to feed upon the fecal matter of other animals such as marmots and ground squirrels. Unpalatable as this may seem, such food does have nourishment as the materials is once again worked through a digestive system to remove leftover nutrients. However, such practices are not without their harmful effects as internal parasites flourish under such conditions. A sick pika was once found with a huge tapeworm accounting for over 25 percent of his total body weight! Fortunately, such parasites in pikas pose no known health hazard to man.

The normal food consists of a great variety of vegetable matter and varies according to geographic location. In Oregon the sagebrush is relished; in New Mexico it's the gooseberry; in California the serviceberry is favored. Whatever type of food the pika gathers, most of it goes on top of his famed "hay-

Short,  
rounded ears,  
brown fur and  
a scuttling  
gait help  
identify the  
pika, an  
animal of the  
highest desert  
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stack."

Pikas, known as *Ochotona princeps* to the mammalogist, must endure extremely harsh winters, living as they do at elevations often in excess of 13,000 feet. The pika prepares for it by storing great quantities of grass and leaves in large "haystacks" just outside his burrow. These "haystacks" may weigh up to 50 pounds and must be "cured" so they will not spoil. The pika does this by carefully spreading the grass blades over a large area to dry. As this first layer dries an additional layer is placed on top. The project continues until a miniature haystack has been formed, thus providing sufficient food for the winter ahead.

As the first snow falls the pika retreats into his burrow — but not to hibernate like his squirrel and marmot neighbors. Our little haymaker is active and about all winter long, tunneling beneath the snow to his haystack and then back again to his burrow.

Even though pikas live in colonies, and help each other out in times of trouble, they're not really much for social chit chat. Pikas are a suspicious lot, always on guard at their lookout posts to make sure a neighbor doesn't cross into another's territory. Because of their long periods of squatting, with legs tightly tucked beneath and eyes cast glaringly over their domain, an early American naturalist gave them the title "Little Chief Hare" alluding to their posture and kinship.

Pikas work during the day, leaving their lookout posts to gather foodstuffs in nearby meadows. Unlike their rabbit cousins, pikas have short hind legs so they must scamper to their feeding grounds rather than hop. They carefully avoid stepping on any lingering snow as

Pikas do not like cold feet. True enough, their feet are covered with fur for insulation, but they nevertheless stick to their cleared "trails," long pathways from rockslide to meadow. It was during their daily routine that biologist Lawrence Kilham observed the social behavior of the pika in the Sapphire Mountains of Montana.

Kilham found pikas to be territorial, establishing definite domains, permitting no trespassing by other pikas. As is the practice of serious students, Kilham affectionately named his study animals "A," "B," and "C." His pika "A" one day snuck into pika "B's" territory, apparently after part of his haystack. As soon as pika "B" saw the invader he promptly gave chase, forcing him back into his own yard and scolding him with several *Eeks!* In the wild such encounters seldom result in violence as the boundaries of each area are well known by all concerned. Scent or "apocrine" glands located on either side of the pika's face help in this respect. The pika rubs his cheek against rocks situated around the perimeters of his territory to insure, by smell, the actual boundary lines.

However, if two pikas are caged together, where scents are lacking, a battle is sure to ensue which results in both pikas being literally torn to shreds by the other's sharp-clawed feet. Pikas have fragile skin that tears easily when abused.

Close proximity is not normal for pikas except during late spring when sexual attraction overcomes territoriality. Actual mating may take place any time from May through September with the resulting birth of three or four offspring about 30 days later. The helpless young weigh all of 1/3 ounce, but growth must be rapid as the pikas are weaned at an early age. Upon leaving the nursery the young pika must busily prepare his haystack for the harsh winter ahead.

During our second day in the Sweetwaters I befriended a young pika who was in the process of preparing his very first haystack. I carefully sat on a rock beside his working area where he became surprisingly tolerant of my presence. He would gather grass blades at my feet and then hop up on a rock beside me and take a long "Little Chief" look at my eyes. I'm not sure — but I think he suspected me of hay stealing! □



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## Aurora's New Treasures

Continued from Page 19

the people in Aurora decided to build with brick after several disastrous fires razed Bodie. Bricks were ordered from a firm in Massachusetts at a ridiculously low price. This was because they could be used as ballast and shipped around the horn to San Francisco. However, from there, they were wagon-freighted over the Sierras by Wells Fargo at a cost of 25 cents per brick!"

It was also Ocie who told us about two of Aurora's new treasures. Geodes and colorful jasp-agate will be found on the north mesa above Aurora Creek, between the transformer station and Aurora. The geode locale is about a .6 mile hike from the station. Keep to the north side of the generally dry creek bed and watch for a faint trail leading up the steep, talus slopes to the wide mesa. Trees and brush line the wash, so the trail is hard to see.

Approaching from Aurora, a car can be driven a short distance down the canyon. Park where it becomes a 4WD trail and climb up the north side to the mesa. It is also possible to reach the collecting areas by hiking west from the first cemetery. One-half mile should bring you to the jasp-agate, another half-mile to the geodes. Walk west and be careful not to veer northwest. In case you are interested, samples of the geodes are on display at the Bridgeport Ranger Station.

Because Aurora is rather well known, Jerry and I didn't even think about digging for bottles when we first visited the old ghost town. None remained on the surface and we assumed "Aurora had been dug." This proved to be a mistake on our part.

On a trip in October 1973, we found Glen and Bessie Cash of Hawthorne, California, camped at Aurora. We enjoyed a pleasant talk with Bessie and met Glen, who was a short distance away, digging in a sizable hole. They were avid bottle collectors and in this same locale, Glen had dug up over a dozen "lady's legs" in good condition!

Radiating out from Aurora like spokes from a giant wheel are trails to challenge both old and new Four-Wheelers. The topography is varied — steep, forested peaks; numerous lava flows; sagebrush-covered plains; alkali flats and, among



Steep rock walls close in and form "the narrows" of Del Monte Canyon. Sharp eyes will spot many ruins along the route including this century-old way-station.

them, almost forgotten historical trails. A copy of Forestry Map, Sec. 2 D-4 of the Toiyabe National Forest (available at Leevining or Bridgeport Ranger Stations) shows so many of these trails that months could be spent exploring without traveling the same one twice. Various U.S.G.S. topographic maps also give accurate detail of specific areas.

Aurora's new treasures will bring great pleasure to the recreationist as he pursues his hobby in the great outdoors. The townsite has been designated a "State Historical Ruins" and we must all help to maintain Aurora as it now stands. Do not destroy any part of a ruin when

digging for bottles and remember to fill your holes.

Visit Aurora and enjoy yourself. Leave the mill and other buildings as you find them. Wander among the headstones in the cemeteries and pay silent homage to those who helped to settle the West. Keep Aurora a legacy your children and their children may also enjoy. Tell them about the courage and dedication of the pioneers who ventured into then unknown lands. Memories, as well as treasures from the past, are precious. Our young people must respect their heritage if America is to remain vigorous.

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## Bring on the Bottle Brigade

*Continued from Page 31*

But you're bound to find one or two special ones out of the bunch. There may even be duplicates of bottles you already have, which are great for trading with other collectors.

On the outskirts of the ghost town, a faint trail leading some 50 to 100 feet, or so, from a house foundation to a small clearing or slight depression indicates the site of an old outhouse. There, the old miner lowered his trousers and in the process sometimes dropped a few coins. (A bonus prize for today's collector.) And if the miner's wife was a teetotaler, he may have done his whiskey nipping there and tossed the empties down the hole, out of sight from accusing eyes.

One enterprising bottle searcher, Bob Wyatt, of Salinas, California, retrieved about 300 whiskey and medicine bottles from such a site. His humorous theory for the multitude of medicine bottles was: "I figure the medicine was for the hangover brought on by all that whiskey."

But outhouses weren't limited to whiskey and medicine bottles. Later, when the miniature structure was moved to a new location, the old hole was sometimes used as a makeshift dump for all sorts of accumulated cans and bottles and then covered over with earth.

In the old desert mining settlements, the dumps were sometimes located some distance from town where refuse was usually tossed into handy dry washes.

One desert collector, Larry O'Malley, known by the locals as "The Prospector," has found some of his prize bottles in this type of dump. The Prospector has an array of more than 800 pre-World War II bottles that would turn many an antique bottle collector green with envy. His collection is the result of 18 years of scouting the deserts on foot and in his four-wheel-drive Jeep, usually accompanied by his wife, Edith, and daughter, 13-year-old Mary Elizabeth.

This author accepted an invitation from the O'Malley family to accompany them on a bottle outing one clear, warm day last November. Our destination was a dump below an old gold mining mill site. O'Malley explained that most people look close to where the houses were and often miss the main dumps. As we bumped along over rocks and ruts,

Edith sighted the glitter of sun reflecting off glass, and excitedly called out, "Stop the car!" She jumped from the Jeep and ran to examine her find. A rousing war-whoop told us that the bottle was whole and probably quite ancient. It was carefully stashed in the vehicle and again we were on our way, with the Jeep slowly crawling through rocky washes. We finally came to an area littered with metal drums, scrap metal and tin cans, all rusted from years of exposure to weather. Contrasting this was the diamond-like sparkle of broken glass which lay scattered on the ground surface. The area looked undisturbed, even though O'Malley admitted that he had searched here briefly once before. As with most conscientious collectors, Larry leaves his dig areas as he finds them.

With small shovels and picks, each of the O'Malleys headed toward creosote and other bushes of the dry tumble-weed variety which dotted the banks of the wash, and began to carefully turn up the sandy soil. No more than two minutes had passed when The Prospector hollered, "I found a bottle!" Sure enough, close to his bush was a perfect little lotion bottle, beautifully opalized by time and ground elements. It had become trapped at the base of the bush by sand when the wash had flooded during sudden desert storms.

The O'Malleys live near the town of Winterhaven on the Colorado Desert with their colorful collection of antique bottles. There are bottles inside and outside their home, in windows and along fences. Broken ones are used as color for rock and glass garden arrangements.

Among O'Malley's prizes are a collection of over 300 electrical insulators, an 1860 Pumpkin Seed bottle, and an old AVON cold cream milk glass jar that has taken on a purplish hue. On the bottom of the jar the raised word AVON has been lettered backwards, becoming NOVA. A misprint? Larry O'Malley wishes he knew the answer to that question. Until he can learn more about it from someone more knowledgeable of old Avon bottles, the AVON, backwards, jar will remain his mystery prize.

Many collectors like to limit their collecting to a few specific types, while others run the gamut of bottle styles. The apparent favorites are those bottles which held alcoholic beverages, medicines or tonic, flavorings, soft drinks,

hair conditioners, sauces, preserves or cosmetics — and fruit jars.

The conversation among seasoned collectors is often salted with terse descriptive words such as Pumpkin Seeds, Sodas, Bitters, Poisons, Embossed — words that describe bottle shapes, lettering and former contents with an economy of vocal effort.

Avon bottles and jars are popular collectors items. The value of many of the Avon Company's old bottles is usually higher than other comparable bottles of that time. In 1908, under the name of C.P. Company — as it was known then — their catalog advertised a bottle of tonic called "Eau de Quinine," which claimed to promote the profuse growth of new hair. The price was 65 cents. Today, according to Avon Research, that same bottle, minus its contents, is valued at up to \$95. C.P. Toilet Water sold in 1908 at 35 cents for two ounces up to two dollars a pint. In mint condition, these empty bottles are worth \$115 and up each!

If you are interested in joining the brigades of bottle seekers, joining a club can be very helpful. Antique bottle clubs such as the San Bernardino County Historical Bottle Club, San Diego Antique Bottle Club, Inc., Arizona Territory Bottle Club, and many others throughout the U.S., can offer the novice collector valuable hints on where and how to collect and what to look for. Old Bottle magazines offer a storehouse of information about historic bottles and bottle clubs.

The bottle collectors' good hunting manners, (promoted by antique bottle clubs), are good insurance that they will continue to be welcome to hunt for bottles on private property. Hunting rules are much like those of other outdoor collecting groups: 1) Always obtain permission to hunt or dig for bottles on private property. 2) Leave the land as you found it — respect the other person's property. And in addition to those rules, be sure to comply with laws concerning BLM or other government lands.

Enjoy the hobby with the companionship of others. It's a wholesome hobby in which all the family can participate, on weekends or during your next vacation. Family bottle outings are a tonic against chronic generation gaposis — as each new exciting discovery becomes a shared experience. □



# Desert Plant Life

by JIM CORNETT

© 1975



THE DESERT WILLOW, *Chilopsis linearis*, is a confusing plant, sometimes tree-like with a single main trunk, but more frequently resembling a bush with a number of stems arising from a common place in the ground. Let's call it a tree for traditional reasons but don't forget that many specimens possess a roundish shrub-like appearance.

*Chilopsis* is a common perennial found from the desert regions of California, east through Arizona and New Mexico, into central Texas. Broad washes are the habitat preferred by these low-branching trees. In such localities they are often the dominant plant ranging up to altitudes in excess of 4000 feet.

This particular member of the *Bignonia* family is a good example of how common names can lead the unfamiliar astray. The desert willow is not a "willow" at all but a catalpa which is far removed from the true willow family *Salicaceae*. It has been long called a "willow" because of its very slender leaves typical of true willows in general. Let's call it a desert catalpa to avoid any

further confusion.

Allegedly, the desert catalpa loses its leaves each fall as the days become increasingly shorter. This is certainly true of those plants growing in the cooler portions of their range. But trees found near sea level or below often make it through the winter months with at least a few viable leaves.

Hummingbirds are attracted to this perennial during the summer as this is the season when the catalpa opens its white to pink blossoms. The deep throat of each flower holds a few drops of nectar for the tiny bird who repays the tree through pollination.

Dr. Edmund Jaeger, desert botanist, describes the desert catalpa as a useful tree. The wood of this six- to 30-foot plant makes excellent fence posts and is still used today by desert ranchers. At one time the flowers, too, were useful, being dried and then used to make a medicinal tea by the Mexicans.

Visit these trees in July when the orchid-like blossoms and slender leaves and seedpods make the desert catalpa a most attractive plant. □

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## MAGNETITE: New Number 6 in Hardness

**O**RTHOCLASE FELDSPAR of the Mohs scale is replaced by magnetite on the new scale. As a hardness indicator, orthoclase has always been viewed as being in error, and probably was one of the basic reasons for the development of the new Mohs scale.

There are a number of reasons for considering orthoclase in error as an indicator of six in hardness. First, it is not always the same hardness. Many authors feel it has a range from 6 to 6½. Second, with such a range, it is not at midpoint between apatite (5) and quartz (7). It is much closer to 7. A third, and probably the most important reason, is that it is difficult to differentiate between most of the feldspars when they are in the massive state, and there is a hardness difference between them. In the crystal form, it is difficult to separate orthoclase from microcline. Each is about as common as the other, few could be sure they had the correct feldspar. Thus, the replacement of orthoclase was almost mandatory.

Chemically, magnetite is iron oxide, with three atoms of iron and four atoms of oxygen (Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>) making up a molecule. It is a heavy mineral, as the iron would suggest; and is about five times heavier than water (a specific gravity of 5). The color is normally black. It is usually found in massive pieces, but when crystallized, it is very brilliant and almost silvery looking. The crystals are octahedrons (double pyramids).

The mineral is part of an interesting series of minerals that are all oxides, and all form octahedral crystals. The other

members of the group are spinel, magnesium aluminum oxide, which is often used as a gem; gahnite, zinc aluminum oxide, which is a variant of spinel; franklinite, a iron, zinc, and manganese oxide; and chromite, chromium oxide. Chromite is the only ore of chromium.

As a hardness indicator, magnetite follows the same characteristics that make halite (new number 2), galena (new number 3), and fluorite (number 4), good choices. Each of these have nearly the same properties in all directions within and on the surface of the material. Thus a scratch in any direction will show the same hardness. This is true with greater certainty with crystals, but generally is also true with massive material. Magnetite crystals are not very common, but the supply can easily be good enough to produce a supply of hardness indicators.

One very fine location for magnetite crystals is an area near Chester, Vermont. Here the magnetite crystals are found in a mica schist in company with fine cubes of pyrite. The schist is easily broken down to release the crystals. The most usual occurrence of magnetite is large massive deposits, and as such can often become an important iron ore.

Magnetite has a property that is of great importance to scientists. It shows a strong attraction to a magnet. Crystals will readily adhere to a magnet, and this is an important method of identification. The massive material is also attracted to a magnet.

It has been found that the molecules of magnetite are in themselves small magnets. Normally, each molecule is lying at random to all the other molecules, and thus the chunk will not show any magnetism of its own. The magnetism of each molecule is neutralized by the others.

At times, magnetite exhibits magnetism of its own, and in this form is known as lodestone. The magnetism is the result of all the molecules oriented so that they lie in the same direction; all south poles in one direction, north poles in the other.

This orientation took place when the magnetite was molten, with each molecule aligning itself with the magnetic field of the earth. Thus, if the material is never moved, it will show the direction of the earth's magnetic field at



the time it solidified.

Scientists have found that magnetite in different parts of the world show a magnetic orientation to other than the present magnetic poles of the earth. For many years, it was thought that the earth's magnetic poles had shifted. Now it is used as proof that the continents have moved in relation to the magnetic poles. This change of position of the continents is now part of the continental drift theory that has completely revolutionized geology.

Lodestone is fairly common material, and found at a number of locations. However, usually only part of a large magnetite deposit is lodestone.

When reduced to very small flat chips, lodestone can be floated on water. In this condition, the chip will turn and align itself with the earth's magnetic poles, and act as a compass. There seems little doubt that this was used as the first compass to obtain a northerly direction. How successful it was on shipboard has always made us wonder. The chip will float as long as the surface of the water is not disturbed. It would appear that the rolling of a ship could easily cause the chip to sink. It must have been a nuisance to frequently have to dry a small chip in order to have an operating compass.

We have had some interesting experiences with lodestone. The area that is now Kaiser's Iron Mine, near Desert Center, California has long been considered as a source for iron ore. We often visited the area before the mine opened.

The hills that made up the area were strewn with large chunks of magnetite and hematite. Some of the magnetites were excellent lodestone. One of our friends devised a method of differentiating between the ordinary magnetite

and lodestone. He took a small stick about two feet long, attached a string about three feet long, on the end of which was placed an ordinary paper clip.

To use this, we went "fishing" for lodestone. All that was needed was to hold the crude "fishpole" over a large black rock. If the chunk was lodestone, the paper clip quickly stopped swaying and was attracted to the specimen. It was not necessary to let the paper clip touch the lodestone; only let it sway about an inch or less above the suspected piece. On some days, fishing was very good, with some of the "catches" larger than we could lift!

Specimens of lodestone are always curious objects. They will attract small nails, tacks, paper clips, and other small iron objects. The small chips of magnetite, broken off during mining or transportation, will cling to the stronger poles, giving the piece a "hairy" look.

There are other iron oxides that may at times be mistaken for magnetite. Hematite, which is composed of two iron atoms and three oxygen atoms ( $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$ ), is nearly always red to brown, but sometimes is quite dark. In crystals, it is jet black. It is not magnetic in any way. Limonite has the same proportions of iron and oxygen as does hematite, but also has one or more molecules of water attached to each iron-oxygen molecule. This is nearly always a light to dark brown, but can be almost black. All three of these iron oxides may occur in the same deposit.

As a hardness indicator, there is some doubt in our minds about the use of magnetite. Most books show it with a slightly variable hardness. However, we do feel that this would be a better one than orthoclase. We will reserve final opinion until it is tested by usage. □




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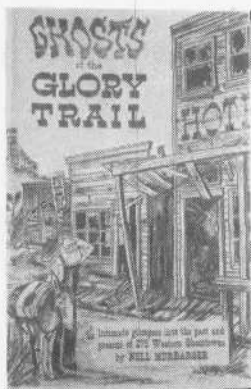
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# Letters to the Editor

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## Yaquitepec Fans . . .

I enjoyed the article on the Marshall South family in the current issue of the magazine. I had often wondered what had happened to the family, as Mr. South and his wife wrote interesting material.

I hope that Yaquitepec will be restored as a shrine in memory of the South Family.

L. HOM,  
Las Vegas, Nevada.

"Yaquitepec." My, what a story Ernie Cowan gave us in the May, '75 issue of *Desert*. What an addition this will be to my memorabilia. Well, maybe I have a little more reason to be excited than many of you who read it.

During the 10 previous years, '22 to '32, Marshal and Tanya South were very close friends of ours in Los Angeles. During these years the Souths were away several times on their desert trips, but when they returned from each trip the Souths and Crockers would get together and go picnicking to the beaches or the mountains. These get-togethers were brief intervals and then long periods of time before they would show up again.

The last time I saw Marshall was in the late '20s. They had just returned to Los Angeles from one of their extended desert safaris. We never heard another word about the Souths until 1952.

Early in 1952, my wife and I were visiting a sick relative in Santa Monica. I picked up a magazine lying on a table. The name of the

magazine was *Desert*. The first thought that flashed in my mind was that it was a magazine all about good things to eat after dinner. Thumbing through it, I read a little poem in the middle of a full page devoted to poetry. The name underneath was Tanya South.

I couldn't believe my eyes. I wrote to Randall Henderson, then Editor of *Desert*, and he was kind enough to send me Tanya's address in San Diego. To make a long story short, we wrote to one another for two or three years, but at the present time it has been more than 20 years since I have heard from her. We were greatly saddened to learn of Marshall's death.

We sincerely hope that funds will be made available for the restoration of Yaquitepec.

CHARLES M. CROCKER,  
Van Nuys, California,

## Echoes from Dog Canyon . . .

I was very interested in the article in the April issue by Jack Kutz, "The Battles of Dog Canyon."

My grandfather was Perry Altman, the half brother of Oliver Lee. They came to New Mexico together and Altman was with Lee through a lot of the troubles.

The statements made by Mr. Kutz were so different from anything I have ever heard or read I feel I must protest. The entire tone of his story of Mr. Lee seems to be biased and unfair. To begin with, at the time of the feud with John Good, Lee was 22 years old. He was described as a handsome man with an almost regal bearing. He was soft spoken and careful of his speech and dress. He neither drank or smoked. Hardly a sight "to make children burst into tears when they saw him on the street."

Granted those were troubled times and I'm sure things were done on both sides that should have never happened. Lee's "gunmen" consisted of his family and a few friends. The Altman house was the one burned down.

Lee, Altman and men named Cooper, Tucker and Kellman were indicted for the killing of Walter Good. Perry Altman was the only one arrested and he was questioned and released. The others surrendered voluntarily. There

was a preliminary hearing. The cases never came to trial.

Before Good left the country there was peace between them. Oliver Lee's "dream of an empire" did not include the Good ranch, it was leased to a Mr. C. P. White.

Frenchy's death never got anywhere near a court. There was no mention of Lee even connected with the killing and although Frenchy was killed in 1894, it was not until 1906 that Lee filed on the property. A Pinkerton detective was said to have found out who killed Frenchy but nothing was ever done about it.

Lee was linked to the Fountain killing. He was tried and found not guilty. To this day no one knows for sure if he was connected in any way, except he said he had nothing to do with it and he was known as a man who told the truth, whatever the circumstances. People testified against him then and he was much more powerful than he was in 1888!

Again, from my information, there was no connection with Lee in the death of Pat Garrett. They were enemies, yes, but the men who killed Garrett said they did it in self defense and that is another story completely.

I would very much like to hear from Mr. Kutz or anyone else who has any information or opinion.

MRS. JO ANN KLINE,  
935 Taft Avenue  
El Cajon, California.

## Plea to Mr. Pegleg . . .

Mr. Pegleg:

Please do not stop writing in. I am sure that there are a lot of people, myself included, that are still interested in what you are willing to say about your find.

If someone else finds your location, would you be opposed to their mining it? Also, being a student of geology, I am puzzled by your answer to Mr. Southworth. He asked if there was any igneous activity nearby and you said that there was a small amount of volcanic activity. In geology, volcanic activity means igneous activity on the surface, such as lava flows, volcanoes, pumice, etc., as opposed to plutonic activity, that which occurs deep beneath the surface and which produces coarse-grained rocks like granite. Could you be more specific?

Can you see the hill from where you park your Jeep in the wash and did you fill the two holes dug by the other people? As you dug down the 3½ feet for the larger nuggets, did you notice if the hill was layered, as in a stream bed, or jumbled, as an area deposited by a flash flood would be? The buckle being in the hill would indicate a flash flood deposit, but the smaller nuggets on the surface, grading to larger ones down deeper, would indicate an uplifted stream deposit.

The pictures present another question. Are they all of the hill or are any of them of the mound? Does the mound have larger rocks on the surface or look different? Did you ever experience a complete loss of signal with your metal detector on the hill or mound?

JOHN MARTIN,  
Vista, California,

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# Calendar of Events

JUNE 28-JULY 6, Prineville Rockhounds Pow Wow. Crook County Fairgrounds. For information: Prineville Rockhounds Pow Wow Assn., P. O. Box 671, Prineville, Oregon 97754.

JULY 4-6, Annual Cactus and Succulent Show, sponsored by the Cactus & Succulent Society of America, Inc., Los Angeles State and County Arboretum, 301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, Calif. Admission free. Contact: Mrs. Kathryn Sabo, 20287 Rustin Rd. Woodland Hills, Calif. 91364.

JULY 19 & 20, Culver City Rock and Mineral Club, Inc., 14th Annual Fiesta of Gems Show, Veterans Memorial Auditorium and Rotunda, Overland at Culver Blvd., Culver City, Calif. Dealer space filled. Chairman: Van Macuff, 3633 Beethoven, Los Angeles, Calif. 90066.

AUGUST 31, Fourth Annual Treasure Hunt sponsored by the California Searcher's, Inc., Gardner's Cove Resort, Highway 132, 12 miles west of Modesto, California. Prizes, camping, fishing, flea market, entertainment.

SEPTEMBER 5-7, Wasatch Gem Societies 15th Annual Gem and Mineral Show, University of Utah Special Events Center, Salt Lake City, Utah. Chairman: David Lewis, 1955 North Redwood Road, Salt Lake City, Utah 84116.

SEPTEMBER 13 & 14, 16th Annual Jubilee of Jewels Show sponsored by the Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society, Exposition Hall, Monterey Fairgrounds, Monterey, Calif. Demonstrations, dealers, food. Donation. Chairman: P. O. Box 5847, Carmel, Calif. 93921.

SEPTEMBER 13 & 14, 9th Annual Harvester of Gems & Mineral Show, sponsored by the Sequoia Gem & Mineral Society, Redwood City Recreation Center, 1328 Roosevelt Ave., Redwood City, California. Dealers, Demonstrations, Food, Door Prizes. Dealer Space filled. Admission. Chairman: Preston Bingham, 1144 17th Ave., Redwood City, Calif. 94063.

SEPTEMBER 20 & 21, The Magic In Rocks Show sponsored by the El Monte Gem & Mineral Club, Inc., Masonic Temple, 4017 No. Tyler, El Monte, Calif. 91732. Dealer space filled. Chairman: Johnny Johnson, 11416 Mulhall St., El Monte, Calif. 91732.

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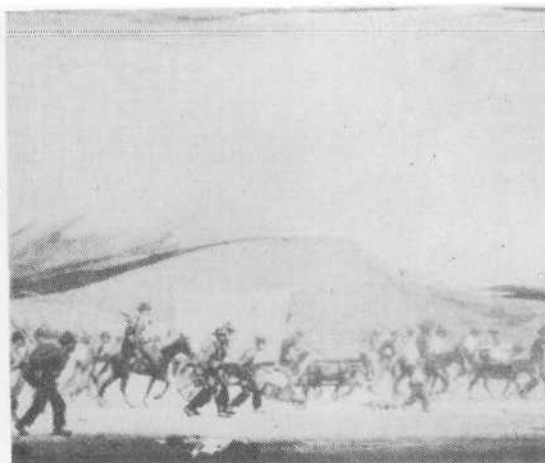
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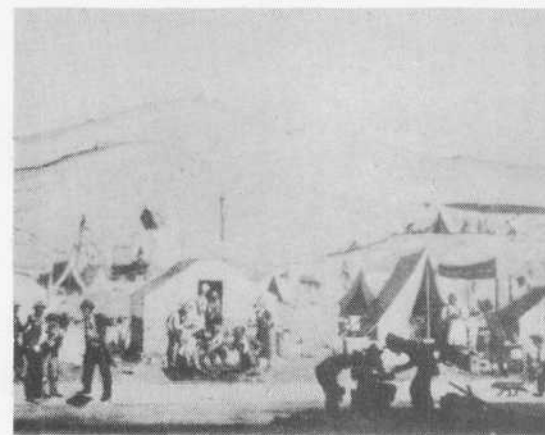
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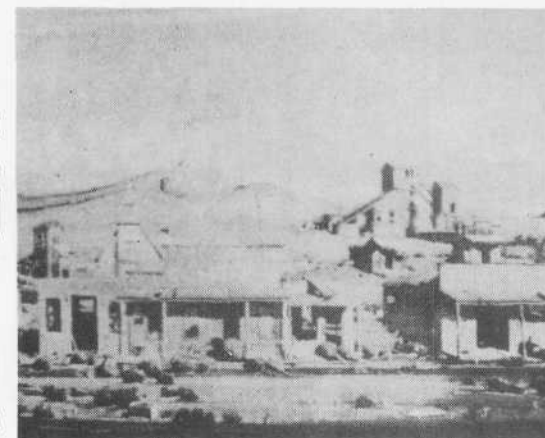
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